

**Social Conscience and Messianic Vision,  
a study in the problems of Gerhart Hauptmann's individualism.**

**by**

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## Introduction

This investigation was begun as the result of a suggestion by Professor Mason, who drew my attention to a passage in Soergel's 'Dichtung und Dichter der Zeit', page 204: 'Trotz alledem war Gerhart Hauptmann nie Parteisozialist, wenn er auch Karl Marx verehrte. Aber er fühlte mit jeder Not und wollte allen helfen. "Ich habe nie einen Menschen gesehen, dem das soziale Empfinden mehr in Fleisch und Blut, ja in das ganze Nervensystem übergegangen war," bezeugt Adalbert von Hanstein.' Professor Mason contrasted this deeply felt social conscience with the individualism that prevented Hauptmann from becoming a member of a political party and suggested that here was a question worth investigating. Later it was found that in Hauptmann, his individualism and his social conscience were inextricably bound up in his messianic visions, and the theme was accordingly widened to include this.

It became early apparent that to trace a complex theme chronologically through a body of work as extensive and diverse as Hauptmann's would be impossible without losing all sense of coherence. The subject has been broken up therefore into a series of related themes, each of which has been treated chronologically. These themes are as follows:-

1. A biographical outline; individualism and

social conscience in 'Das Abenteuer meiner Jugend'.

2. The 'Promethidenlos' as the matrix of Hauptmann's later writings.

3. Insecurity and persecution mania in Hauptmann's works.

4. Social conscience and 'Eros'.

5. Individualism and social conscience in 'Till Eulenspiegel'.

6. Hauptmann's messianic vision.

7. Conclusions.

As far as possible in all references to Hauptmann's own writings, the edition used is 'Das gesammelte Werk' (Suhrkamp 1942). For the sake of brevity Volume 2 page 321 is referred to as 2/321.

I am greatly indebted to Professor Mason for many helpful suggestions and much valuable criticism throughout the whole of the research.

## Chapter I

### Individualism and Social Conscience

#### in 'Das Abenteuer meiner Jugend'.

We begin our investigation with a brief outline of Hauptmann's life, in which we shall try to trace the origins and development of any tendencies in his character towards individualism on the one hand, and social conscience on the other. For the purpose of this brief survey, our principal source will be the autobiography, 'Das Abenteuer meiner Jugend'.

X Gerhart Hauptmann was born in 1862 in Salzbrunn, a Silesian spa. His father was a hotel-keeper, and this alone had a powerful influence on Hauptmann's childhood; for during the summer season, when the hotel was full, his mother was constantly harrassed and overworked, and had but little time or energy to devote to her four children, of whom Gerhart was the youngest. In the winter it was different, for then the hotel had no guests and the children could enjoy the comforting atmosphere of a normal home; but this could not compensate for the lack of continuity in the family life. Hauptmann summarises the position thus: 'Vater und Mutter gehörten sommers der Oeffentlichkeit, sie waren den Winter über Privatleute.'<sup>1</sup> Later he writes: 'In dieser stillen leeren Verfassung gehörte das Haus uns, im

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<sup>1</sup> 14/14.



Sommer war es uns gänzlich entzogen und uns Kindern auch Vater and Mutter. Sie gehörten mit allem, in allem der Oeffentlichkeit.'<sup>2</sup> It is easy to perceive behind these lines, in the stir of the busy hotel, a small boy, who feels lonely and neglected and longs for the security of his mother's attention.

Yet Hauptmann does not look upon his childhood as an unhappy time. Far from it, the things he associates with his boyhood are, 'Freiheit, Stille, Freude, Selbstherrlichkeit'.<sup>3</sup> But these happy days are remembered as belonging to a paradise from which he was about to be cast out. For that is how he felt when he found he was to be sent to school: 'Wollte man mich verstossen aus einer so vollkommen schönen, mir so vollkommen angemessenen Daseinsform?'<sup>4</sup> No doubt most children suffer a certain shock when first compelled to leave the shelter of home and face the uncertainties of school, and in fact Hauptmann's life at the village school proved to be not so unpleasant as he had feared, yet the initial shock of having to submit to a new and narrower discipline must have been great for him to remember it so vividly so many years later. The fear of becoming an outcast occurred early in Hauptmann's experience and was to be intensified in later years.

The picture we have of Hauptmann at this stage is of

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<sup>2</sup>loc. cit.    <sup>3</sup>14/17;    <sup>4</sup>loc. cit.

a child, on the surface happy and carefree, but underneath anxious, deeply disturbed if the even course of his life is threatened by change.

Hauptmann suffered much as a child from being compared unfavourably with his little cousin, Georg Schubert, who was something of an infant prodigy; such comparisons can only have intensified the underlying insecurity in Hauptmann's character.

There were other factors tending in the same direction. The tranquillity of family life was disturbed by much half-suppressed animosity between Hauptmann's father and the Straehlers, his mother's family, who had been opposed to the match from the outset. Hauptmann's mother suffered considerably from this division in her affections and loyalties, and in any case felt disappointed in her marriage. As a child, Hauptmann felt his mother's unhappiness when he was with her, but in self-defence he instinctively dismissed the subject from his mind and fled into the restless activity of his own life.<sup>5</sup>

After the death of ~~of~~ Grandfather Straehler, Hauptmann's parents quarrelled bitterly, and then the pent up emotions of years burst forth.<sup>6</sup> Hauptmann says of this quarrel: 'Eine unüberbrückbare Kluft zwischen meiner Mutter und meinem Vater tat sich auf, von deren Vorhandensein in

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<sup>5</sup>See 14/114;      <sup>6</sup>See 14/116-120;

meine glückliche Daseinsform kaum der Schatten einer Vermutung gefallen war.'<sup>7</sup> Later he adds: 'Die peinliche Auseinandersetzung und ihre leidenschaftliche Masslosigkeit kamen einem lokalen Erdbeben gleich, das den familiären Boden erschütterte. Niemals erlangte er mehr seine alte Festigkeit.'<sup>8</sup> To witness such a violent quarrel between his parents must be a shattering blow to a boy's sense of security, and it is not surprising that it made a deep and lasting impression upon Hauptmann.

The disturbing effect upon him of these experiences may be seen in certain recurring features of his dreaming and meditation. Hauptmann speaks of them in these words: 'Ich fragte mich: wie rettet man sich aus der eigenen Verlassenheit? Halte dich an Vater und Mutter! - Vater und Mutter teilen dieselbe Verlassenheit und Verlorenheit! - Wende dich an Bruder und Schwester, die Tausende und Tausende deiner Mitmenschen! Und nun gab ich die Antwort mir selber mit einem Bilde aus meiner bildgenährten Traumes- und Vorstellungswelt: die Gesamtheit der Menschen sah ich als Schiffbrüchige auf einer Eisscholle ausgesetzt, die von einer Sintflut umgeben war.'<sup>9</sup> This passage gives us a brief but revealing glimpse into the mind of a desperately lonely, frightened little boy, and is clear evidence that his sense of security was seriously undermined by these unhappy childhood experiences.

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<sup>7</sup>14/117; <sup>8</sup>14/119; <sup>9</sup>14/43-44.



This sense of insecurity was the root cause of two incidents in Hauptmann's childhood, both of them pieces of bravado. On one occasion he tried to persuade the farm children at Rittergut Lohnig that he could fly.<sup>10</sup> Of this affair Hauptmann himself writes: 'Was ich tat, geschah zwar im Spiel, war aber schliesslich auf einem übertriebenen Geltungsbedürfnis aufgebaut und dem Missbrauch der Unwissenheit meiner Gespielen.'<sup>11</sup> On the second occasion, he pretended to his playmates that a violin which had been stolen from his father, was a Stradivarius.<sup>12</sup> Of this Hauptmann writes: 'Ein Geltungsbedürfnis, verbunden mit lebhafter Phantasie, muss mir damals Streiche gespielt haben, ich ergab mich der Aufschneiderei.'<sup>13</sup> Such urges to show off are here clearly attributable to a feeling of inner weakness and inferiority.

We may say then that in his childhood, Hauptmann felt deep-seated fears; these were caused partly by the harrassing nature of his mother's life in the hotel and its consequent effect upon him, and even more so by his emotional distress when he became aware of the under-current of friction between his parents and finally observed them quarrelling violently. As a result of these experiences, the child felt basically insecure.

The accident of being born the son of a hotel-keeper

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<sup>10</sup>14/72; <sup>11</sup>14/72-73; <sup>12</sup>14/210; <sup>13</sup>14/210.



had a second important influence on Hauptmann. As the landlord's son he was able to share in the life both of the well-to-do guests and of the servants below stairs. In his play he mixed freely with all the village children and had easy access to the houses and workshops of the poor. He writes: 'Ich war auf der Grossen und Kleinen (Seite des Dorfes) zu Hause. Ich ging nicht nur in den Weberhütten, sondern auch in den übrigen Werkstätten der Kleinen als ein Dazugehöriger ungehindert, ja unbeachtet aus und ein, ebenso auch in den einzelnen, bis dahin versprengten Elendsquartieren der Bergleute aus dem nahen Industrie- und Kohlenbezirk. Dem Schmiede sah ich zu, wenn er Hufeisen auflegte, dem von Tuchfetzen umgebenen Schneider auf seinem niederen Tisch bei der Stichelei, dem Schuhmacher auf seinem Schemel vor dem Arbeitstisch, wo hinter den wassergefüllten Glaskugeln die Oelfunse brannte.'<sup>14</sup> In this way Hauptmann acquired a first-hand knowledge of the conditions in which the poor lived and worked, and this knowledge was to contribute much to the atmosphere of such plays as 'Vor Sonnenaufgang', 'Die Weber' and 'Fuhrmann Henschel'.

As a child then, Hauptmann was able to move easily through most of the strata of society, from the genteel society who patronized the hotel to the humblest of the village workmen; and he was not slow to observe the

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<sup>14</sup>14/51.

differences. 'Und was die Breite meiner Euphorionbewegung betrifft und die Anstauspunkte ihrer Absprünge, so lagen diese bald in der vorderen bald in der hinteren Welt, die durch den Hauptbau des Gasthofs getrennt wurden, und von denen die eine die der glücklich Geniessenden, die andere die der Arbeit, der Sorge, des Verzichtes, der Verzweiflung war.'<sup>15</sup> Nor was he in any doubt as to where his sympathies lay, for he goes on: 'Ohne die Sonnenseite des Daseins vor der Fassade des Hauses scheel anzusehen, rechnete ich mich doch durchaus zur anderen Partei, die gewissermassen im Schatten lebte. Wieder und wieder stürzte ich mich ins Licht, doch nie, ohne bald in den Schatten zurückzukehren.'<sup>16</sup>

Here the foundations of a social conscience are already laid; the boy has begun to perceive the inequalities and injustices in society and, without feeling any antagonism towards the lucky few, he counts himself with the less fortunate many.

In 1874, when he was about twelve years old, Hauptmann was sent to the 'Realschule' in Breslau. Here he entered upon a period of great mental suffering, which left many deep scars. Of this period of his life he writes: 'Weder unter Lehrern noch unter Schülern genoss ich damals Sympathie oder hatte gar einen Freund. Unter den Insassen der Pension ebensowenig.'<sup>17</sup> And later:

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<sup>15</sup><sub>14/45</sub>; <sup>16</sup><sub>loc. cit.</sub> <sup>17</sup><sub>14/220</sub>.

'Aehnlich muss einem bürgerlich Toten zumute sein wie mir damals unter Lehrern und Mitschülern. Allem ging ich, ich spürte es klar, als fünftes unnützes Rad am Wagen so nebenher oder wurde als Ballast mitgeschleppt. Man schien Übereingekommen, mich laufen zu lassen, mich nicht zu beachten, als ob ich nicht da wäre. Von Nichtbeachtung zur Verachtung ist nur ein Schritt, und so habe ich mich denn auch in der ersten Breslauer Zeit dauernd und mit Recht verachtet gefühlt.'<sup>18</sup> The hidden fears of the child have become much more intense as he grows towards youth; too sensitive to know how to face the turbulent school life he shrinks back into himself, feeling lonely and forsaken, and, while suffering cruel blows from his teachers and fellow-pupils, he begins to magnify them in his imagination till we can observe in him the first symptoms of persecution mania.

In his second year in Breslau, Hauptmann moved with his brother Carl into lodgings with Pastor Gauda, the prison chaplain, who many years later was to serve Hauptmann as a model for the character of Pastor Angermann. In this household Hauptmann found a means of escaping from his sufferings; he found relief in playing with the three little girls of the family and inventing stories to amuse them. Of this activity he writes: 'Ich glaube, dieses Geschichtenerzählen war

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<sup>18</sup>14/230-231.



mein wesentliches Narkotikum. Ich weiss, dass ich dabei die ganze verlorene Welt meines ersten Jahrzehnts immer wieder erneuert und variiert habe. Ich selbst war der Knabe, dessen natürlich heldenhafte Geschichte <sup>e</sup>wider zur Sprache kam.<sup>19</sup>

In his story-telling Hauptmann is escaping temporarily from his bitterly unpleasant life to a world of his own imagination in which he is the centre of attention. It is a subtler variation of the urge which prompted him to show off during earlier years. It is interesting that this rudimental literary activity should arise from Hauptmann's need to save himself from being too much hurt by the world around him.

During these years, Hauptmann saw the squalid Breslau slums and he knew of the brothels that closely adjoined the school.<sup>20</sup> At the prison chaplain's table, the talk was all of criminals, their characters and their life. In later years the memory of these things must have given Hauptmann much food for thought, and even at the time, in the midst of his own sufferings, he must have had a fellow-feeling for the oppressed.

Partly owing to the failure of his teachers to understand their over-sensitive pupil, partly to his own sick imagination, Hauptmann's career at the Realschule in Breslau was completely unsuccessful, and in 1878, at the age of fifteen, he left, full of new hope, to

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<sup>19</sup> 14/245; <sup>20</sup> See 14/263-264.



enter the service of his uncle, Gustav Schubert, as an apprentice at his farm, Rittergut Lohnig.

His high hopes were quickly disappointed, however, for he soon found himself placed in charge of a gang of farm labourers, who deeply resented being put under the authority of a youth so ignorant of their work, and who made no bones of showing their contempt for him.<sup>21</sup> This was a bitter experience for a boy, whose self-confidence had been sadly shaken at school, and who was now only too ready to believe that the whole world was against him. Yet he soon realised that the hatred which he encountered amongst these farm workers, was not directed exclusively at himself, but at everyone of his class. This realisation threw new light upon the social injustices of which he was already aware. The hostility of the workers set him thinking about the whole basis of civilisation. 'Bei solchem Grübeln ging mir der ganze Gutsbetrieb in einem neuen, durchdringenden Lichte auf. Ich sah den verborgenen Kampf, der ihm zugrunde lag. Alle diese Gutsleute, Ochsen- und Pferdeknechte, Stallmägde, Tagelöhnerinnen und Tagelöhner, die in der Küche des Gesindehauses oder in ihren engen, halbverfallenen Katen ihre Kartoffeln kochten, verschlossen einen Ingrimme bei sich, den ihre scheinbare naturgegebene und selbstverständliche Lage,

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<sup>21</sup>See 14/322-324.

die sie nur widerwillig trugen, ihnen aufnötigte.....  
 Das war - zum ersten Male empfand ich es - die wirkliche,  
 eiserne Fron, die sich mir sichtbar, hörbar und fühlbar  
 machte und mir zu erkennen gab, dass ich von den  
 Grundlagen unserer Zivilisation bisher nichts gewusst  
 hatte.<sup>22</sup> Hitherto he had been aware of social  
 injustice; now he began to perceive the resentment it  
 aroused.

This impression was confirmed as he gained experience  
 of farm life. He found amongst the country people a deep-  
 rooted distrust of authority in all its forms, political,  
 military, religious. All the representatives of  
 authority, including the schoolmaster and the parson,  
 were constantly under the sharp scrutiny of many hostile  
 eyes. The ideas and ideals that were widely current in  
 other spheres, the national military glory, the progress  
 in all fields of science, the upsurge in the whole life  
 of the nation, were met here with cold scepticism. These  
 workers were consumed with a deep and bitter hatred of  
 the other classes.

When he fully realised the depth of these feelings,  
 Hauptmann felt impelled to try to do something towards  
 a reconciliation. 'Das grosse Unbehagen, in das mich  
 meine Entdeckung versetzte, verlangte irgend eine  
 Linderung. Ich glaubte sie darin zu finden, dass ich

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<sup>22</sup>14/325-326.

nach Kräften versöhnlich wirkte.'<sup>23</sup> Here we have an exact description of the first stirrings of social conscience in Hauptmann; he feels uneasy, dissatisfied with himself, and cannot rest until he has done something to help. It is characteristic that he has this feeling, not when he first discovers how unjust the social structure is or how much suffering it causes, but when he observes the bitterness and hatred that derive from the injustice and suffering. In later life it was still the mutual hostility dividing class from class, that was to distress Hauptmann most. One incident at Lederose made him realise how peculiarly sensitive he was to such hostility. While out walking one Sunday, he heard some youths shout after him: 'Das ist der verfluchte Menschenschinder!'<sup>24</sup> He himself says of this experience: 'Es war ein Damaskus, was ich erlebt hatte. Es riss mir einen Abgrund auf....Zugleich erkannte ich die empfindlichste Seite meiner Natur, besann mich auf die Hauptmannsche Menschlichkeit, deren Lob manches einfache Weiblein und Männlein in Salzbrunn vor die Ohren von uns Brüdern gebracht und uns somit im Wohltun befeuert hatte.'<sup>25</sup> This incident reawakened in Hauptmann the benevolent attitudes towards social inferiors that he had absorbed during his childhood, and brought them to a conscious level.

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<sup>23</sup><sub>14/398;</sub>    <sup>24</sup><sub>14/380;</sub>    <sup>25</sup><sub>14/381.</sub>



During this period, Hauptmann underwent the rapid and violent emotional developments of puberty. As the turbulent emotions of adolescence stirred within him, he withdrew more and more into himself. He felt the erotic desires and impulses of dawning maturity fermenting under the surface and, partly owing to his somewhat prudish upbringing, partly to the unusually devout otherworldly atmosphere of his uncle's house, he began to be filled with a sense of guilt, of his own wickedness and worthlessness.<sup>26</sup>

With this sense of guilt came the urge to hide, to seek shelter from the world about him. He began to delight in the early rising which his work demanded, because the enveloping darkness made him feel safe. 'Der Onkel schlief, die Tante schlief, ich war geborgen in Nacht und Einsamkeit.'<sup>27</sup> To these guilty feelings was added a sense of failure in his work. Physically Hauptmann was unequal to the work, for his uncle really required, not an apprentice, but a 'Grossknecht'. Unable to lead the farmhands as he was expected to, Hauptmann was tortured by the feeling of uselessness - 'ein Gefühl der eigenen Ueberflüssigkeit'<sup>28</sup> - which he had already experienced at school in Breslau. Once again he sought escape in loneliness. 'Am liebsten war mir das entlegenste und einsamste Arbeitsgebiet.'<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> See 14/351-352; <sup>27</sup> 14/351; <sup>28</sup> 14/352; <sup>29</sup> 14/352.



The devout atmosphere of his uncle's house - the Schuberts were followers of Herrnhut - also had its effect upon the boy. In the confused state of his emotions, he began to be obsessed by religious delusions such as we find in 'Emanuel Quint'; at one stage he even insisted on going home in order to warn his family of the impending end of the world.<sup>30</sup>

These severe emotional stresses began to impair his physical health. He developed a persistent cough, and soon was coughing blood. No doubt the heavy work that overtaxed his strength was a contributory factor, but the root cause of his illness must have been emotional. This symptom<sup>31</sup> recurred again and again in the succeeding years, and at times of great mental strain Hauptmann frequently found himself coughing blood. This in turn brought with it a tendency towards hypochondria,<sup>31</sup> which Hands von Hülse was still able to observe in 1924, more than forty years later.<sup>32</sup>

During the Lederose period, two events aroused even more intense emotional storms in Hauptmann. In the first place there was some talk of his being adopted by the Schuberts; this came as another great shock to his sense of security and his self-esteem. 'Ich hatte seltsamerweise einen gewaltigen Namensstolz: den Familiennamen aufzugeben, wäre für mich dasselbe gewesen, als ob ich, seiner

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<sup>30</sup> 14/387-388; <sup>31</sup> 14/374; <sup>32</sup> Hülse: Freundschaft mit einem Genius, p. 49;

unwürdig, von den Meinen vor die Türe geworfen, das heisst ausgestossen worden sei.'<sup>33</sup> Again we see in him this secret fear of becoming an outcast.

The second event was his boyish love for a little girl, the seven year old Aennchen Schütz, who paid a visit to Lederose with her parents.

We have already discussed the sense of inferiority that developed in Hauptmann during adolescence. These feelings led him to avoid the society of girls lest he should see their contempt. Now under the stimulus of his love for Aennchen Schütz he was transformed; instead of cringing in horror at his own worthlessness, he began to see heroic visions of himself and to revel in them.

'Bald ritt ich als fahrender Ritter in goldener, bald in schwarzer Rüstung aus, um jeden niederzuwerfen, der meiner glorreichen Herrin nicht huldigen wollte.'<sup>34</sup> The real cause of these dreams of grandeur was not his calf-love; his love for Aennchen Schütz did no more than impress its own shape upon a kind of dream life that Hauptmann had already begun to experience; it was a further development of the urge to escape from an intolerable reality into the realm of imagination, an urge that expressed itself in Breslau in the story-telling to the Gauda children. The real root of these dreams lay in his despair at his supposed worthlessness and in

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<sup>33</sup>14/357;    <sup>34</sup>14/378.

his resentment at the scorn he thought people felt for him. Hauptmann says as much in his autobiography:

'Eine Art Ingrimm war seine Grundlage. Ich hätte gewünscht und wünschte es brennend, doch hoffnungslos, besonders Tante Auguste und Tante Elisabeth die Geringschätzung heimzuzählen, die Verachtung zu vergelten, die sie immer noch mir gegenüber an den Tag legten ....., Um sie zu demütigen, immer tiefer und tiefst zu demütigen, geriet ich in wahrhaft ausschweifende Vorstellungen von Glanz und Erfolg hinein.'<sup>35</sup>

We may sum up the Lederose period by saying that it was a time of confused and turbulent emotions; Hauptmann was then plagued by a sense of failure and of guilt, haunted by religious obsessions and the fear of becoming an outcast before God and men. His illusions of inferiority in their turn awoke the opposite illusion of grandeur, which was heightened and coloured by his love for Aennchen Schütz. During this period too we observe his first serious concern about class inequalities and class hatred.

In 1879 Hauptmann returned home from Lederose, and from that time all thought of an agricultural career for him was given up. For a time, his future was uncertain; he studied under private tuition for the examination which would entitle him to serve a reduced period of one

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<sup>35</sup>14/378.



year's military service. But his ambitions began to turn towards sculpture. He obtained his father's approval and in October 1880, he entered the Kunst- und Gewerbeschule in Breslau to study sculpture. Here he remained until 1882, when in November, he entered the University of Jena, studying there until April 1883.

The decision to become a sculptor had a powerful effect upon the individualistic side of his nature; it set his ambition soaring in more and more intoxicating dreams. To his brother Carl he wrote: 'Aus dem ganzen Gebirge von Carrara will ich ein Monument meiner Grösse meisseln.'<sup>36</sup> Nor did this intoxication leave him when he began his studies at the school of art. As he worked there modelling clay, this was his train of thought: 'Nach dem Mythos hat Gott den Menschen aus Ton gemacht. Und wer wollte den Sinn davon verkennen? Da war es mir manchmal, als wäre dies noch der göttliche Ton, an dem ich bosselte, und zwar mit nichts Geringerem als des Herrgotts Schöpferhand.'<sup>37</sup> Hauptmann's artistic ambitions provided a much more powerful impetus than had his love for Aennchen Schütz and under their influence, his delusions of grandeur broke all bounds.

This inward change was reflected also in his outward bearing, which was now defiant, challenging and aggressive. In a self-portrait of his student days in

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<sup>36</sup>14/422;    <sup>37</sup>14/475;



Breslau, he writes: 'Ich war zum Desperado geworden. Nicht nur forderte ich zum Beispiel durch mein langes Haar überall ohne Absicht den öffentlichen Hohn heraus, sondern ich wollte ihn herausfordern. Das seit dem ersten Breslauer Schultag ausgeübte Dauerattentat zur Vernichtung meiner Persönlichkeit hatte schliesslich ihre Auferstehung von den Toten nicht zu hindern vermocht. Und nun das neue Leben mich überkam, betonte ich sie auf jede Weise, mitunter vielleicht recht ungebärdig.'<sup>38</sup>

Although we may understand the psychological causes of this kind of exhibitionism, it is nevertheless clear that, with such an aggressive bearing, Hauptmann must have seemed a singularly unpleasant young man, and it is not surprising that he made many enemies; this aggressiveness must account too for his temporary expulsion from the school of art, and for some of the unpopularity of the Hauptmann circle at Jena. The phrase, 'Dauerattentat zur Vernichtung meiner Persönlichkeit' is particularly revealing. Hauptmann apparently believed that for years the people around him had been secret enemies, conspiring to destroy his inmost being. Such an attitude of mind must be regarded as pathological, and it certainly shows the fundamental weakness behind his dreams of grandeur and his new aggressiveness.

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<sup>38</sup> 14/438.

During the second Breslau period Hauptmann suffered considerable hardship. His parents were in financial difficulties and could not maintain him properly. In addition, he was not sufficiently self-disciplined to make the best use of what help he did receive from them. Thus, when he received twice a week his parcel of food from home, he and his friends would set to and consume it all at one sitting, leaving the rest of the time to take care of itself. Often he was on the verge of starvation. He lived as best he could, by sending begging letters to his friends, by pawning such valuables as he had, till in the end he possessed nothing but what he stood up in. This way of life can scarcely have increased his self-respect. If we add to this, that he drank and smoked heavily in wild, unsteady company, that although inadequately clad, he was constantly out in the bitterly cold winter weather, and all this with a constitution already weakened by the overwork and nervous strain of the Lederose period, we can only wonder that he survived at all. In fact, his health was undermined by his privations, and his tendency towards hypochondria was intensified.<sup>39</sup> All this dealt a further blow to Hauptmann's sense of security.

We get a glimpse of Hauptmann's state of mind when he tells of his early relationship with Marie Thienemann,

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<sup>39</sup>See 14/441.

who was later to become his first wife. He writes:

'Beide waren wir seit dem ersten Schultag misshandelt worden. Wir hatten verwandte Kämpfe durchgemacht, uns zu ähnlicher Freiheit durchgerungen. Zwei, die sich für missverstanden und unterdrückt gehalten hatten, trafen sich.'<sup>40</sup>

The self-pity in these lines is evident, and it is easy to see in what their freedom consisted. At least as far as Hauptmann is concerned, it means simply that instead of withdrawing timidly within himself, he was now defiant and aggressive. But the inner weakness was still there. We see further evidence of this in an episode from his days at Jena.

'Eine mir heut unerklärliche Furcht drängte mir mitunter einen gänzlich unbegründeten Verteidigungszustand auf, der mich sogar veranlasste einen kleinen Revolver stets bei mir zu tragen.'<sup>41</sup>

This is pure persecution mania.

Hauptmann's love affair with Marie Thienemann put an end to his financial troubles, for she was a wealthy heiress and just before he left Breslau for Jena, she began to give him money. Hauptmann continued to live off her generosity up to and after their marriage. It is not the least strange aspect of his character that he who was otherwise so easily hurt, seems to have felt no shame at being kept for years by the woman he loved. He appears to have accepted the situation as his natural right.

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<sup>40</sup>14/503-504;    <sup>41</sup>14/560.



We have seen then that although Hauptmann in his student days at Breslau and Jena appeared a very different person from the apprentice at Lederose, yet fundamentally the difference was not great. Behind the facade of self-assertiveness, the old inner insecurity was greater than ever, even although financially he was now well provided for.

During the Lederose period, while on a visit to his parents, Hauptmann made the acquaintance of Alfred Ploetz, a friend of Carl's. Ploetz was now a student at the University of Breslau, and during the second Breslau period, he and Gerhart Hauptmann became close friends. Ploetz held strong views on the state of society - he was a Platonist - and under his influence Hauptmann became more and more critical of all the institutions of the state; began to question more and more all the accepted values and standards.

At this time, Hauptmann witnessed much human misery in Breslau. His friends Schmidt, Fleischer and Puschmann were all poorer even than he, and Puschmann himself lived in a slum. The sight of this suffering and degradation must have made Hauptmann the more receptive to Ploetz's ideas.

We can perceive the influence of Ploetz in Hauptmann's early conversations with Marie Thienemann. Passionately he preached to her: 'Der Mensch ist frei, und wär er in

Ketten geboren! Menschliche Institutionen sind unvollkommen, jeder einzelne ist berufen, an ihrer Vervollkommnung zu arbeiten.'<sup>42</sup> And later: 'Von hier aus riss ich Marie zur Kritik der meisten festen Werte unserer Gesellschaftsordnung mit. Eigene Gedanken, übernommene Gedanken vermischten sich. Es gab keine Institution, vor der mein Denken haltmachte. Und zwar in einer sieghaft ruhmreichen Zeit, wo Preussen Deutschland geeinigt hatte, wo der Glanz und die Kraft eines unerhörten Aufschwungs alle blendete, nicht nur die Deutschen, sondern die Welt.'<sup>43</sup>

When Hauptmann moved to Jena, he and his circle of friends still corresponded with Ploetz in Breslau. 'Er (Ploetz) predigte brieflich eine platonische Staatsutopie, für die man sich eine Kolonie suchen sollte. Bald wurde Vancouver Island, bald irgendein südamerikanisches Orangen- und Zitronenparadies ins Auge gefasst, um sie zu verwirklichen, das heisst: zugleich in ihr die höchstmögliche irdische Glückseligkeit.'<sup>44</sup> Hauptmann expounds the ideals upon which this Utopia was to be based in 'Das Buch der Leidenschaft', where he writes: 'Der Jünglingsbund, den wir bildeten, musste, durch Sympathie geschaffen, naturgemäss kommunistisch sein. Da gab es nichts, materiell oder ideel, was wir uns gegenseitig nicht mitteilten. Auch von aussen wurde am

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<sup>42</sup>14/510; <sup>43</sup>14/510; <sup>44</sup>14/561.

Ende die Idee des Kommunismus, wie sie zur gangbaren Geistesmünze geworden ist, in unseren Band gebracht. Wir fassten sie leidenschaftlich auf, um sie in unseren Sinne zu erfüllen und auszubauen. Das Chaos, das uns umgab, schien uns seelenlos und überlebt zu sein. Wir wollten fliehen, wollten ein neues Leben anfangen, am liebsten auf einer entlegenen Insel im Ozean. Bei dem, was wir planten, wären wir im Bereiche der christlichen Zivilisation gestört, ja verfemt worden. Ich erinnere mich, dass wir die Ehe nicht dulden wollten, ebenso, dass wir die Weltverneinung des Christentums mit ihrer Verachtung des Leibes und der natürlichen Triebe als verderblichen Wahnsinn bekämpften.<sup>45</sup> Here we find Hauptmann with ideas similar to those of socialism, while the antichristian element seems to point to the influence of Nietzsche; as however, Hauptmann came under the influence of Nietzsche later than the Jena period, it may be that the strong antichristian spirit expressed in this quotation was not present in the original plan. The island Utopia was never realised, but the idea played an important part in Hauptmann's thinking throughout his life.<sup>46</sup> He treats the theme ironically in 'Die Insel der grossen Mutter' and discusses the significance and importance of Utopian ideals in 'Der neue Christophorus'.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>12/103; <sup>46</sup>Voigt makes an analysis of the island Utopia motif in his 'Hauptmann-Studien', pp. 130-145;

<sup>47</sup>Der neue Christophorus, pp. 108 and 121-124.



We may say, then, that during his studies at Breslau and Jena, the sense of weakness that lay deep in Hauptmann's personality, began to take effect. On the one hand, it expressed itself in wild, grandiose dreams, in eccentric dress and aggressive behaviour; on the other, it produced in him strong irrational fears. During the same period, stimulated by Ploetz, he became an ardent apostle of social reform, his ideas in this direction being crystallised in plans for an island Utopia.

In April 1883, Hauptmann set sail in the steamer 'Livorno' with the intention of travelling to Greece. He did not go beyond Italy however. In Jena, he had heard lectures by Professor Gaedechens on classical architecture and in particular on the Acropolis.<sup>48</sup> These lectures had interested Hauptmann profoundly, and he had resolved to go and see for himself. With the help of Marie Thienemann he was able to do so. This was the beginning of his longing for Greece.

We have already discussed the psychological disturbances that perturbed Hauptmann's spirit at this time. He was perplexed too by conflicting ambitions; he could not decide whether he was to be a sculptor or a writer; in addition, his love for Marie Thienemann seemed to make demands upon him that conflicted with

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<sup>48</sup>14/552.

the urgent need to develop his talents; and on top of his own problems, the whole world seemed to require him to set it right. Behind all lay that insidious sense of insecurity. He must have longed to be free from it all, at least for a time. We may legitimately suppose then, that the longing for Greece was no more than the outward symbol of a secret yearning for a place of peace, away from the conflicts of his own warring self.

We shall speak in detail of Hauptmann's voyage in the 'Livorno' in connection with the 'Promethidenlos'. It is sufficient to say here that he did not in fact escape from himself. The grandiose dreams continued, alternating with moods of self-pity and self-abasement. At the same time, the sight of the wretched inmates of a Malaga brothel and the squalid slums of Naples distressed him and roused him to indignation. Thus the two aspects of his character in which we are interested were both intensified as a result of this journey.

Italy made a profound impression on Hauptmann; he now decided to stay and work there. Accordingly, on arriving again in Germany, he persuaded Marie Thienemann to set him up in a studio in Rome, where he returned and lived for a year, practising as a sculptor.

The stay in Rome is of great importance in Hauptmann's development. He went there filled with a burning indignation at the wrongs in society; he preached ardently

that these should be put right. This attitude, coupled with his aggressive bearing, aroused some animosity in the German colony in Rome, and his imagination soon exaggerated this into an official conspiracy to persecute him for his political views.

Meanwhile he had read the 'Prometheus Bound' of Aeschylos. At once he saw in himself an affinity with the Greek demi-god; in his dreams he became a new Prometheus, persecuted like the original for his love of mankind. He even thought of appearing on the stage in this role.<sup>49</sup> This interest in Prometheus is evident in the title of the 'Promethidenlos' and the demi-god was to remain an important symbolic figure for Hauptmann.

The stay in Rome was brought to a sudden end by illness. Hauptmann was struck down by typhus, and for a time was dangerously ill. During his convalescence, he returned to his parents, who were now living in Hamburg. On the journey back he turned his experiences over in his mind. His illness somehow became associated with the persecution he had endured, at least in his imagination, for the sake of the poor and oppressed; he felt that his fight for the welfare of others had brought himself into real danger; the old fear that his inmost personality was threatened reasserted itself, and

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<sup>49</sup>See 14/649.



for the first time his social conscience conflicted with his deep fear for himself. To quote his own words:

'Ausserdem gelobte ich mir, meine Krallen ganz einzuziehen. Du bist zu klein und die Welt zu gross, sagte ich mir. Wie willst du entscheidend auf sie einwirken? Wer es versucht, hat den Schaden davon. Ich wollte von nun an meine Zunge im Zaun halten, schweigend lernen den anderen das Reden überlassen. Wie eine Offenbarung kam diese Erneuerung über mich. Es ist keine Uebertreibung, wenn ich dabei an das Damaskus des Saulus denken musste. Die grosse Besinnung war eingetreten.'<sup>50</sup>

The precise similarity with St. Paul's experience seems a little obscure. Hauptmann however appears to have outdone the apostle in this respect, for this is his second Damascus. He underwent the first at Lederose when he was accused of being a 'Menschenschinder'.<sup>51</sup>

It is interesting that the two experiences are opposite in character; the first warned Hauptmann to think more of others, the second to think more of himself. The result of the second Damascus was a resolve to be more cautious in future. He had given away too much of himself; he had allowed himself to be carried away by his own enthusiasm; he had been too ready to preach his Utopian socialistic ideals and to reveal his ambitious dreams. As a result he had been made to suffer. And

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<sup>50</sup>14/683; <sup>51</sup>See p. 12 above.

what of the social problem? Was he now to abandon all interest in it? Must he repudiate his obligations to the weakest members of society? Hauptmann answers the question thus: 'Der Gedanke der Pflicht gegen andere, also der des sozialen Verhaltens blieb. Allein ich verwarf die bisherigen Mittel, also das Weltverbesserertum. Und ausserdem stellte ich diesem Gedanken das Recht und die Pflicht gegen mich selbst an die Seite. Zu welchem Ende und wem zuliebe, fragte ich mich, verschwendet man seine Persönlichkeit?'<sup>52</sup> His social conscience has here come into conflict with what in Hauptmann is almost an instinct for self-preservation, and in the ensuing struggle it is conscience that must give way. And yet he does not repudiate his duty to society in itself, but only the means he had hitherto envisaged for fulfilling this duty; that is to say he rejects the idealistic plans that he had taken over from the Ploetz circle; the pity for his fellows he cannot reject, for it is a part of himself.

For a time Hauptmann did withdraw from the struggle. He spent the summer of 1884 in and around Dresden, visiting his fiancée at Hohenhaus, being visited by his friends Hugo Ernst Schmidt and Oskar Müller at Gruben on the Elbe, but leading a passive life as his strength slowly returned to him. In the autumn however, the

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<sup>52</sup><sub>14/684.</sub>

stirrings of the outside world beckoned him again and in November, he set out for Berlin to matriculate at the University.

In Berlin, Hauptmann was constantly in the society of his old friends Hugo Ernst Schmidt and Ferdinand Simon. They spent most evenings together in heavy drinking and smoking. Their principal interest was in music, and as far as Hauptmann was concerned, above all in Beethoven. In Beethoven, he saw a new Prometheus and was completely carried away as he listened to the music. He writes: 'Und dieser Prometheus sang, obgleich gefesselt, doch frei in Not, Kampf, Sieg und Untergang das grosse Menschheitslied. Es klang in mir und weckte sein Echo ebenso in Ferdinand Simon und Hugo Schmidt.'<sup>53</sup>

Hauptmann's preoccupation with Prometheus is seen too in his enthusiasm for the dramatic figure of Uriel Acosta of Gutzkow's play. 'Nicht nur als Paraderolle liebte ich den Uriel, das Bekennerhafte an der Gestalt zog mich innig an. Wieder war da etwas dem rebellisch-prometheisch-beethovenisch Heilandhaften Verwandtes, dem ich verschrieben war.'<sup>54</sup> For Hauptmann, Prometheus symbolises his revolt against the established order; for he was still a rebel, as he shows by his interest in Brachvogel's Narziss: 'der andere Protestler gegen die sozial betonierte Oberschicht, der damals auf den

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<sup>53</sup>14/708; <sup>54</sup>14/711-712.



Bühnen spukte, nämlich "Narziss" von Brachvogel.<sup>55</sup> For the same reason Hauptmann delighted admiringly in dramatic characters such as the farmer Pedro Crespo in Calderon's 'El Alcalde de Zalamea' and Verrina in Schiller's 'Fiesco'.<sup>56</sup>

It is clear from all this, that the 'Damascus' following upon the crisis in Rome had by no means permanently quenched Hauptmann's enthusiasm for the cause of social justice. It may be that he kept a more guarded tongue, but that is all. In his dreams he still saw himself as another Prometheus, and the characters with whom he identified himself are all rebels against the established order.

Hauptmann was soon faced with another crisis. He was warned by a doctor, Professor Krause, that if he continued his present way of life, he would be dead in six months.<sup>57</sup> At once his deepest fears for himself were reawakened. The problems of society were quickly forgotten; to save his very life he must again withdraw from the struggle. Soon after the doctor's warning, he was married to Marie Thienemann. In a fortnight Hauptmann was coughing blood again, with him a common sign of emotional disturbance; in this case, he was probably finding it difficult to adjust himself to the narrower restrictions of married life. For a

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<sup>55</sup> 14/712; <sup>56</sup> see 14/711; <sup>57</sup> see 14/717.

time he tried to continue his old life in Berlin, dragging his young wife along with him to the carousals with his friends. But he could not continue to neglect the doctor's warning when he found himself spitting blood, and in a short time the Hauptmanns gave up their lodging and moved out to Erkner, then a wooded district in the Brandenburg Forest.

In these quiet surroundings, Hauptmann hoped to free himself from his emotional conflicts and to find peace in a simple country life, 'einem ländlich unkomplizierten Leben, fern von den zahllosen Spannungen und Bindungen, die das Leben im allgemeinen mit sich bringt'.<sup>58</sup> The state of mind that induced Hauptmann to retreat to Erkner, was similar to his longing for Greece. In both cases, what he wanted was to escape from the turmoil of life into the inner security of the hermit's cell. But he could not succeed. The problems from which he was fleeing were not peculiar to Berlin, Rome, Dresden or any other locality, they were problems within himself. 'Nur habe ich mich getäuscht, wenn ich glaubte, die expansiven Kräfte meiner Natur auf diese Weise zu überwinden. Gewiss, ich beruhte fast nur in mir, aber die Enge, in die ich mich mit Mary verbannt hatte, schloss ein inneres Gewühle nicht aus, das zur Geburt drängte. Verborgен, verschüttet, unsichtbar

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<sup>58</sup> 14/729.

gemacht wie ein Samenkorn, konnte ein neues Beginnen, Keimen, Drängen und Werden, ein neues Sein durchstossen.<sup>59</sup>

We may safely conclude that the emotional strains and storms of his student days continued to perplex him and to make him long to be free from them.

The first winter in Erkner, as described in 'Das Abenteuer meiner Jugend', was filled with gloom. Hauptmann was nervous about his health and spent long hours wandering in the forest, sunk in hypochondriac depression. He was obsessed with his own illness and also afraid for his wife who, herself not strong and given to morbid introspection, was then expecting her first child. Living as they did in this isolated spot, they could expect little help when their ordeal came, and in face of it they both felt lonely and forsaken. Hauptmann's despondency is clearly shown in the poems of the period,<sup>60</sup> which have a tired morbid note: 'Ich bin ein Falk, der nicht fliegen mag!' He writes that he was unwilling to undertake any big literary work because he feared he would not live to finish it.<sup>61</sup> It is perhaps not surprising that in the midst of this morbid self-pity he should have started the 'Jesusstudien'. Hauptmann saw Christ as a lonely outcast who was understood by nobody. In his self-pity it was how he saw himself. In this mood, Prometheus is supplanted

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<sup>59</sup> 14/729-730; <sup>60</sup> 14/730-733; <sup>61</sup> 14/730.



by Christ.

In February Hauptmann was jerked sharply back into reality; his son Ivo was born. In a moment the cares of his sick imagination were dispersed. He writes: 'Wochen- und monatelang wurde meine Sorge und Tätigkeit allein von dem Kinde in Anspruch genommen. Es gemeinsam mit seiner Mutter zu betreuen, war meine erste vollwertig soziale Tätigkeit.'<sup>62</sup> And later: 'Mit einemmal umgab mich eine nüchterne phantasmagorienbefreite Luft. Die intelligible Welt hatte der nackten Wirklichkeit Platz gemacht. Illusionen waren durch Pflichten verdrängt: nicht mehr durch jene der Einbildung, sondern durch andere, die in der unmittelbaren Not ihre Voraussetzung hatten.'<sup>63</sup> This passage is interesting for what it tells us about Hauptmann's state of mind before the birth of his son; it shows how completely divorced from external reality he must have been; it surely does not normally require the birth of a child to awaken in a married man the realisation that he has immediate social duties to perform. Now Hauptmann appears to have become so engrossed in his family responsibilities that his duty towards society as a whole seems to him illusory.

The following winter the security of his woodland retreat began to be disturbed. He became unpleasantly aware of the nearness of the giant Berlin, the glow from

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<sup>62</sup><sub>14/735</sub>; <sup>63</sup><sub>14/736</sub>.

which he could see reflected in the sky of an evening.

'Mit einer Hellsicht, die vielleicht der eines Fiebernden glich, sah ich die wilden schmerzlichen Verknäulungen ihres Innern. Was wurde nicht alles aus der drei deutsche Meilen entfernten Stadt an Elend und Jammer ans Ufer gespült!... Das ungeheure Lebewesen und Sterbewesen Berlin, wie gesagt, war mir alpartig gegenwärtig.'<sup>64</sup> Presumably as the pressure of family duties slackened, Hauptmann was once more becoming sensitive to the human suffering around him and the consciousness of it was beginning to disturb the security of his retreat.

It is perhaps a sign of this trend, that the Hauptmanns found the second winter in Erkner unendurable. In January they paid a visit to Hauptmann's parents in Hamburg, where Hauptmann, in spite of his poor health and hypochondria, flung himself into his self-appointed task of observing and recording in his note-book the hectic activity of the town. In the following passage we are given a glimpse of his state of mind: 'Wenn ich einerseits Hypochonder war, medizinische Handbücher wälzte, mir die schwersten Krankheiten andichtete, war ich bei meinen nächtlichen Omnibusfahrten in Kälte und Nässe wiederum gegen mich selbst ganz rücksichtslos. Ein solches Verhalten war widerspruchsvoll. Da aber

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<sup>64</sup>14/743.

mein künstlerischer Trieb in mir gleichsam das Leben selber war, so musste er mich schliesslich immer wieder, allen Hindernissen durch Krankheitsbeschwerden und Hypochondrien zum Trotz, fort- und emporreissen.<sup>65</sup>

Here we see one individualistic impulse in conflict with another; to make him overcome his pathological fears about his own health, it requires the spur of his literary ambitions.

On his return to Erkner, Hauptmann still managed to overcome his tendency towards self-centred brooding and now his interest was more specifically directed towards social questions. He writes: 'Ich machte mich mit den kleinen Leuten bekannt, Förstern, Fischern, Kätnerfamilien und Bahnwärtern, betrachtete eine Waschfrau, ein Spitalmütterchen eingehend und mit der gleichen Liebe, als wenn sie eine Trägerin von Szepter und Krone gewesen wäre. Ich unterhielt mich mit den Arbeitern einer chemischen Fabrik über ihre Leiden, Freuden und Hoffnungen und fand hier, in nächster Nähe Berlins, besonders auf den einsamen Dörfern, ein Menschenwesen, das sich seit einem halben Jahrtausend und länger unverändert erhalten hatte. Dass es ein geeinigtes Deutschland gab, wussten sie nicht. Davon, dass ein Königreich Sachsen, ein Königreich Bayern, ein Königreich Württemberg bestand, hatten sie nie gehört. Es gab einen Kaiser in Berlin:

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<sup>65</sup>14/745.



viele wussten noch nichts davon.'<sup>66</sup> Hauptmann was renewing the contact with the common people that he had already made in his childhood and in Lederose. In making the acquaintance of these people, he found models for many characters that were later to appear in his works; the most obvious examples are Bahnwärter Thiel and Mutter Wolff. It is characteristic of Hauptmann that he does not lose sight of the individual in the mass when he thinks of social problems; he is interested in the sorrows and joys of the man, and not in the difficulties of his class.

In that year, 1887, Hauptmann was summoned to appear as a witness in the trial of socialists at Breslau; this was the outcome of the plans to build a Utopia on socialist principles with which he had been associated. In connection with his appearance at this trial, Hauptmann explains in 'Das Abenteuer meiner Jugend' his attitude towards socialism. To begin with, he explains why he had drawn apart from any co-ordinated movement aiming at social reform, by saying: 'Ich hatte zu viel mit mir selbst zu tun.'<sup>67</sup> Later he goes on: 'Stand ich dem Sozialismus nahe, so fühlte ich mich doch nicht als Sozialisten. Die Einzigkeit meines Wesens war es, auf der ich bestand und die ich gegen alles mit verzweifelter Mut verteidigte.'<sup>68</sup> Here again we have evidence of a

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<sup>66</sup> 14/747-748; <sup>67</sup> 14/753; <sup>68</sup> 14/753

conflict between his sense of duty towards others and his fears and ambitions for himself. His sense of justice led him to believe in socialist principles, but any form of political association seemed to contain a threat to his own individuality; he was afraid of being swallowed up and losing his identity in a movement. This doubtless explains why throughout his life he consistently stood aside from politics.

In the spring of 1888 the Hauptmanns went to Zürich to visit Carl Hauptmann who was studying at the university there in company with Ploetz and Ferdinand Simon. Once again we see Gerhart Hauptmann plunged into the thick of the social problem. He and his friends filled the air with their discussions, not only of socialism itself; they were fervent champions of the emancipation of women, of anti-alcoholism. They were bubbling with enthusiasm at the rapid progress being made in all the fields of science. They believed that now they could drive evil from the world: 'die Woge des Elends, die immer gegenwärtige Brandung des Jammers warf trotzdem damals nur leuchtenden Schaum an unseren Strand, den die Sonne vergoldet hatte. Aber wir waren ja auch Soldaten, die sich überzeugt hielten, wider Elend und Jammer der Menschheit ins Feld zu ziehen! Sollte ja damals doch das Paradies aus dem Jenseits ins Diesseits verlegt werden!'<sup>69</sup> Hauptmann is here far from the

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<sup>69</sup>14/775.

pathological self-absorption which we observed not so long before in the earlier Erkner days. The pendulum had gone full swing.

If we look back over Hauptmann's periodic changes of mood, we observe a distinct movement and counter-movement between an expansive and an introspective mood; in the first we see Hauptmann filled with a loving compassion for his fellow men, opening his inmost heart to them in Rome, or furiously indignant at some tyranny or social injustice, as in Berlin, or overflowing with enthusiasm for social and scientific progress, as in Zürich; in the opposite mood, we see him, hurt as a direct result of his expansiveness, or perhaps afraid for his health, seeking to withdraw into himself, to protect himself against all painful contact with the outside world, trying - in vain in the long run - to devote himself to himself and his own illusions - the mood of Erkner and of the period immediately after his collapse in Rome. In short, there is in Hauptmann a tension between his individualism on the one hand and his social conscience on the other, and this tension is the root cause of his fluctuating moods.

In addition, Hauptmann's mood swings between hypochondria and persecution mania at one extreme and delusions of grandeur at the other, and it may be coloured at the same time by his social conscience.



Hauptmann's opposing moods are reflected in his works too, where we find a sharp contrast between those that are highly realistic in theme and style and for the most part deal directly with some aspect of the social problem, and works of pure fantasy, where Hauptmann has turned his back on the outside world to look inwards to a dream world of his own creation, and in which the problems of society play no part except as a background against which to see himself. In the first category we may group works such as 'Vor Sonnenaufgang', 'Das Friedensfest', 'Einsame Menschen', 'Die Weber', 'Florian Geyer', 'Fuhrmann Henschel', 'Rose Bernd', 'Die Ratten', 'Dorothea Angermann', 'Vor Sonnenuntergang' and 'Wanda'; in the second, works like 'Die versunkene Glocke', 'Elga', 'Der Bogen des Odysseus', 'Indipohdi', 'Veland', 'Das Meerwunder', 'Die Insel der grossen Mutter', 'Der grosse Traum'. The contrast between these two categories is most evident in works in which both influences are felt and which are divided between the two styles, realistic and fantastic, works such as 'Hanneles Himmelfahrt', 'Und Pippa tanzt', and much later 'Till Eulenspiegel'.

We have still to mention the experience which must have shaken the foundations of Hauptmann's security as much as any other single factor, namely the ten year long struggle which forms the theme of 'Das Buch der Leidenschaft', and in which he was torn between two

women, Mary his first wife, and Margarete Marschalk whom he was at last able to marry in 1904. We can see the effect upon him of this prolonged conflict in the description in 'Das Buch der Leidenschaft' of Haus Wiesenstein, which he had built for himself and Margarete Marschalk three years before the dissolution of his first marriage. 'Er (der Bergfried - Haus Wiesenstein) steht nach Bestimmung und Lage ausserhalb des Bürgertums. Er hat einen festen, gedrunghenen Turm, der die Dämonen schrecken und einer Welt von Feinden Trotz bieten soll. Er riecht nach Wehrgängen, Bastionen und Schiesscharten. Sein Inneres, wenn erst der Bergfried einmal bewohnbar ist, denke ich mir heimlich-unheimlich, eine Stätte bedrohter Sicherheit.'<sup>70</sup> This passage reveals the same basic emotions that we have traced through his early life, the same insecurity, the fear of being cast out from society, the persecution mania. We can observe the same emotions underlying a later passage describing his feelings on taking possession of the house: 'Nun flüchte ich nicht mehr vor der Welt, ich stelle mich nun vielmehr der Welt. Mein Haus meine Burg! Ein Weichen, Flüchten, Ducken oder Versteckenspielen gibt es ferner nicht. Mit diesen Mauern werde ich Weib und Kind und mein Recht auf Selbstbestimmung bis zum letzten Tropfen Blutes verteidigen.'<sup>71</sup> Here we see Hauptmann

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<sup>70</sup>12/365;    <sup>71</sup>12/385.

entrenched in his new home, resolved to flee no further from the enemies that threaten his security. Yet, as he carries these enemies within himself, it is clear that the house will be no more able to afford him permanent protection than was his earlier retreat to Erkner. We may deduce as much from the end of 'Das Buch der Leidenschaft', in the passage expressing Hauptmann's sense of triumph and relief after his formal marriage with Margarete Marschalk (Anja of the book). His words show that the house had not proved the safe refuge he had originally hoped: 'Warum ist dieses Haus nun eine feste Burg, eine erst wahrhaft feste geworden in dem Augenblick, wo sie nicht mehr belagert wird? Gerade die Feinde, um derentwillen sie errichtet worden ist, sind nun abgezogen. Das Atem geschieht mit einer Leichtigkeit, die ich seit einem Jahrzehnt nicht gekannt habe.'<sup>72</sup>

One must doubt whether the turbulent spirits that troubled that restless soul, would be so easily lulled to sleep. The restless wanderings between Baltic, Mediterranean and Silesia that remained a necessity for Hauptmann's creative work, suggest the contrary.

There is one characteristic in Hauptmann which recurs through all his various moods; it is his habit of self-dramatization. Thus, as we have seen, when he



experiences a shock which makes him resolve to behave differently henceforth, he at once sees himself in the rôle of Saint Paul; when he is filled with compassion for his fellows, he is playing the part of Prometheus or Christ. There is a self-consciousness about almost all his feelings that robs one of pity for him even in his sufferings; for he is so absorbed in them and so full of pity for himself that it makes one doubt how genuine the suffering is. In these moods of self-pity too, he appears blinded to the sufferings of others; this failing must have contributed to the failure of his first marriage, for often he appears to have been obsessed with his own troubles when he might have been expected to be thinking of his wife's; this is particularly so during the Erkner period.

In our concentration upon the extreme traits of Hauptmann's character, it is inevitable that we have presented a somewhat distorted picture of the man. A quotation from Hans von Hülßen may help to correct this fault. He writes of Hauptmann: 'denn er war schön: in seiner Herzenswärme, seiner unendlichen Menschlichkeit, in seiner Milde wie in seinem Zorn, vor allem in seiner Fähigkeit zur Freundschaft.'<sup>73</sup> Hauptmann was not always so self-absorbed then that he lacked warmth and kindness; after all these came from the same source as his

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<sup>73</sup>Hülßen: 'Freundschaft mit einem Genius' p. 7.

social conscience. This quality of warmth and thoughtful kindness is seen also in Hülsen's account of Hauptmann's tact on an occasion on which he was recognised by autograph hunters while in the company of distinguished friends who had not been recognised. Hauptmann made a point of telling who his friends were and of not giving his own autograph till last.<sup>74</sup> Thomas Mann tells of a similar incident in his tribute, 'Hauptmann der Freund',<sup>75</sup> from which we may conclude that this was a habit of Hauptmann's. It is worth noting therefore that despite his bouts of persecution mania and delusions of grandeur, Hauptmann possessed a deep fund of human kindness that made him a good friend and considerate companion.

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<sup>74</sup>ibid. p. 33; <sup>75</sup>German Life and Letters, April, 1953 - New Series. Vol. VI No. 3.

## Chapter II

### The 'Promethidenlos' as the Matrix of Hauptmann's later writings.

The earliest published work of Gerhart Hauptmann is the 'Promethidenlos', and it is here that we begin the study of the works themselves.

Although of little intrinsic literary value, the 'Promethidenlos' is of importance to us because, being an immature work, it reveals clearly and starkly certain elements which appear in much of Hauptmann's later and greater writing. We must however beware of laying too much stress on traits which are mere manifestations of immaturity.

We have already touched briefly upon Hauptmann's feeling of affinity with Prometheus.<sup>76</sup> We must now discuss more fully why he feels himself to be a son of Prometheus.

In Part II of 'Das Abenteuer meiner Jugend', Hauptmann explains how he was attracted to the 'Prometheus Bound' of Aeschylus. 'Meine Knabenzeit, so glücklich sie war, machte mich in einem ungewöhnlichen Masse mit der angeborenen menschlichen Eristik vertraut. Wer wüsste nicht, dass Eristik das innerste Wesen des Dramas ist. Also war es das Drama, als das ich das Leben zu leben gewöhnt ward. Anders verstand ich das

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<sup>76</sup> See pp. 26 and 30 above.



Leben nicht. Ob mich das glücklich machte oder nicht, zog ich nicht in Betracht.' / 'Ich werde mich oft nach Ruhe, nach Frieden geseht haben. Aber das Drama, das ich später Urdrama nannte, lebte nun einmal in mir. Der Vater, die Mutter, Die Geschwister, die engere und weitere Familie agierten zunächst darin. Wie schon einmal erwähnt, wurden auf das innere Forum, wo diese Schatten Eristik übten, alle wichtigen Fragen gebracht und unter Affekten ausgekämpft. Ich hatte meine Einmaligkeit gegen sie durchzusetzen.' / 'Das war es, worin mir der Gefesselte Prometheus entgegenkam.'<sup>77</sup>

We have already discussed the family quarrels that were the ultimate cause of this mental conflict.<sup>78</sup> As a consequence Hauptmann's sense of security was undermined; he felt himself exposed to forces much stronger than himself, which threatened to overwhelm him and extinguish his individuality in the same way as Prometheus is menaced by almighty Zeus.

It is but a step from this emotion to persecution mania, and long before the Rome period, Hauptmann was showing symptoms of this. We may therefore regard his sufferings at the hands of the German community in Rome as a delusion. To Hauptmann himself, of course, they were real enough. He felt he was surrounded by powerful enemies bent on his destruction. He writes in

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<sup>77</sup>14/650; <sup>78</sup>See p. 3 above.

'Das Abenteuer meiner Jugend': 'Wie er (Prometheus), war auch ich von Feinden umgeben, da sich mein inneres Forum und meine innere Menschenwelt geweitet und vervielfältigt hatten. Ich spürte um mich "Kraft" und "Gewalt" am Werk und ihre von höchsten Stellen gestützte Ueberlegenheit.'<sup>79</sup> Hauptmann imagined that the German authorities in Italy stood behind his tormentors.

If we bear in mind that Hauptmann thought he had been persecuted because of his socialist sympathies - he had widely proclaimed his association with the 'Ikarier', a society which aimed at founding a Utopian state in America<sup>80</sup> - the parallel with Prometheus is complete. Like Prometheus, Hauptmann was persecuted for his love towards mankind.

From here it is but a small step to follow the parallel to Christ, crucified for his love towards men. Hauptmann himself writes: 'Hier wird Prometheus ein Jesus am Kreuz. Auch die einzige Sünde Jesu ist Menschenliebe, die er büsst.'<sup>81</sup> We are following now a thread which will lead in the end to 'Emanuel Quint'.

We must now turn our attention to the poem itself, a poetical account of Hauptmann's experiences on his voyage from Hamburg to Naples in 1883. The whole conception of the poem is clearly influenced by 'Childe Harold'. It is to a large extent autobiographical and

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<sup>79</sup>14/650; <sup>80</sup>see pp. 22-23 above; <sup>81</sup>14/651.

for the most part, we are justified in identifying the hero, Selin, with Hauptmann himself.

The first canto, in which we find Selin going aboard the ship in Hamburg, is mostly devoted to an account of the hero's life so far. This approximates closely to Hauptmann's own, as he describes it in 'Das Abenteuer meiner Jugend'. A happy, unfettered childhood is followed by a bitterly unhappy school life. Hauptmann likens the young Selin to a tree which has been growing freely and vigorously. Now all the strong, young growth is cut down by gardeners.

'Was nun zurückblieb, kümmerlich gebrochen,  
ist Knieholz gleich am Boden hingebrochen.' 82

In other words, Selin has been crushed and repressed by his teachers; his most individual instincts, the qualities that make him different from other people, have been deliberately frustrated:

'Auf eigne Triebe fiel das schärfste Beil.' 83

They were striking at the source of his individuality.

At the end of his school life Selin is a wretched, frustrated youth, whose self-confidence has been sapped; he is like a tree, 'verdorrt, geknickt im Schaft.' 84

Later, when he goes to the Kunstakademie full of idealistic zeal for his art, Selin is quickly disillusioned:

'Ein Volk von Krämern schleift des Marmors Decken



ein Volk von Bäckern bäckt den braunen Ton,  
 statt heil'ger Priester Lumpen nur und Gecken,  
 statt stiller Wahrheit Lug und Neid und Hohn.' 85

Here Hauptmann again reflects his own experiences at the Art College in Breslau; he went there filled with visions of his own magnificence as an artist; in comparison with this view of himself, most of his teachers seemed to him inferior craftsmen, who lacked his own lofty artistic ideals, and for whom he could feel only contempt; this attitude in turn - and it is scarcely to be wondered at - aroused the hostility of many of his fellow students, and called down upon his head what seemed to him envious, malicious jibes. The effect upon Selin of this experience is that he is once more thrust back within himself, prevented from growing freely.

Selin turns at last to the Muse of Poetry, who summons him forth into the world: 'Hinaus, hinaus, mein Tempel ist die Erde!' 86 It is in obedience to this call that Selin sets out on his voyage.

This first canto shows Hauptmann looking at himself in a mood of self-pity, brooding over the injustices of his life at school and afterwards, in short, <sup>showing</sup> all the characteristics of a frustrated, repressed individualism.

In the second canto the ship is at sea, and we find an abrupt change in Selin's mood; now he is soaring in dreams of his own greatness as a poet.

'Ein Dichter sein mit Strahlenkranz und Krone,  
bei dessen Tönen lauscht die ganze Welt,  
sein Sessel schwebende Wolken throne,  
am Firmamente leuchtend aufgestellt,  
in seiner Brust die Sprache jeder Zone,  
von dessen Leier Blitz und Donner fällt:  
das war das winzigste von seinen Bildern;  
die andern kann kein Menschenwort auch schildern.'<sup>87</sup>

This sudden change of mood from the depths of self-pity to visions of superhuman power and greatness is not really surprising; both moods are manifestations of the same mental condition. There is a fundamental feeling of insecurity; in the one mood, the individual sees himself alone, helpless, persecuted; in the other, he escapes from his intolerable sense of weakness by imagining himself to be superhumanly great and powerful. In the poem, the repressed individualism of the first mood bursts its bonds and soars in giddy visions of glory. Hauptmann is of course unwilling to admit to himself that these visions are merely delusions of grandeur fed on self-love:

'Weit vom Gemeinen werden sie bereitet,

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<sup>87</sup><sub>1/11</sub>.

nicht Neid und Ruhmsucht haben sie gemalt,  
 ureigne Kraft hat solche Frucht gezeitet,  
 ureigne Kraft, die göttlich, himmlisch prahlt.  
 O hielten Götter, was uns so entgleitet  
 und was kein Himmelreich uns je bezahlt.  
 Es ist dahin, doch einmal ist's gewesen,  
 wir sind es los, sind, wenn ihr wollt, genesen.<sup>88</sup>

Here Hauptmann appears to be aware that his experience is unreal and is trying to persuade himself that it is somehow or other genuine.

Many years later, Hauptmann discusses the same experience in 'Das Abenteuer meiner Jugend': 'Man missbraucht dieses Wort Grössenwahn, wenn man es auf die erbärmliche Lafferei ehrgeiziger Dummköpfe anwendet. Die grosse Empfindung dieser Art, die ich damals hatte und die sich ins unaussprechlich Erhabene weitete, verführte mich zu irgendeinem äusseren Dünkel nicht. Meinethalben war es Wahn; aber ist dann nicht alles Wahn? Weiss man nicht, dass jede Empfindung nur ihre eigne Realität bedeutet und flüchtig ist, und hat nicht Immanuel Kant trocken festgestellt, das Ding an sich bleibe ewig von unserer Erkenntnis geschieden?'<sup>89</sup>  
 Perhaps half-aware that his pretensions are a little preposterous, Hauptmann tries to use Kant in order to clothe them with the respectability of a recognised

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<sup>88</sup> 1/12;    <sup>89</sup> 14/652.



philosophy. The result is hardly convincing.

The extent of these pretensions may be shown by a quotation from 'Das Abenteuer meiner Jugend': 'Die Idee mich als Gott zu nehmen, schreckte mich nicht; Jehova selbst hatte den Menschen nach seinem Bilde geschaffen. Ich brauchte nur mein eigenes Gefühl, und nicht einmal, was ich von Platon gelernt hatte, zur Anerkennung von etwas Göttlichem in mir heranzuziehen. Ueberdies war ich religiös, hatte Religion; und war sie nicht etwas Göttliches? Und braucht man an eine Gottheit zu glauben um göttlich zu sein?'<sup>90</sup> This attempt to justify himself appears to be pure casuistry.

Professor Gregor sheds some light on Hauptmann's view of religion when he discusses Chapiro's 'Gespräche mit Gerhart Hauptmann'. He writes: 'Religiosität sei die Triebkraft, die Menschen Tempel und Theater bauen, Städte und Staaten gründen und Kunstwerke schaffen liess- alles, was wir im höheren Sinne Menschlichkeit nennen.'<sup>91</sup> 'Religion' and 'ureigne Kraft' are really one and the same; they are the creative impulse in Hauptmann; when filled with this creative impulse, he is part of the divine force which created the universe and is imbued with all the power and sublime majesty of a god; for a brief moment he has become a god, or is possessed by a god.

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<sup>90</sup>14/650-651;

<sup>91</sup>Gregor, 'Gerhart Hauptmann' p.67.



There is nothing original in this idea of the divinity of the creative artist; it was widely propounded during Goethe's era, notably by Goethe himself and Hölderlin. Hauptmann again adopts a well-known conception to give a greater air of legitimacy to his delusion of grandeur. The experience ~~must~~<sup>s</sup> remain none the less a delusion.

The mood of the poem then, has swung over from the brooding self-pity which pervades the first canto, into the arrogant self-confidence of the creative artist who feels himself to be divine.

So far, Hauptmann's eye has been turned inwards upon himself in the guise of Selin. Now in Cantos III and IV he turns his attention to the world about him. For the first time in the poem we see the effect of social conscience.

Characteristically he does this allegorically, not abstractly. In a dream, he sees a female figure who symbolises prostitution. She tells her story. As a young innocent girl she has been seduced; her good name is lost; she is turned out into the world and spurned by society. She is compelled to become a prostitute, her body becomes diseased and she finds her revenge on society in the spreading of this disease.

It is in this allegory that Hauptmann launches his attack on society. In it he reveals the sufferings

of the prostitute and castigates the hypocrisy of men who spurn the prostitute in public, yet seek her caresses in secret. The passage shows the spreading disease as a terrible scourge of society, and most strikingly it shows the effect of suffering on the character of the girl herself, who ends by gloating as she sees the spreading disease avenging her against her enemy, society.

We have said that the story is told by a figure who represents prostitution. But for Hauptmann, this figure acquires flesh and blood, and her sufferings and loneliness are vividly brought home to us.

'Nun wollte nimmer mir ein Obdach lachen,  
die Menschen schlugen mich - sie nannten's Schem;  
ich aber stand bei Blitz und Donnerkrachen  
in Einsamkeit und wurde krumm und lahm,  
mich hat zerfleischt des Wahnes blut'ger Rachen,  
ein jeder Knabe, der gelaufen kam,  
spie mich aus seiner Brust. - So zugerichtet  
hat man mich freilich, aber nicht vernichtet.'<sup>92</sup>

Despite the melodramatic tone, Hauptmann's genuine pity and indignation are here apparent.

Canto IV is devoted to the poetical version of Hauptmann's experience in the brothels of Malaga, which is described also in 'Das Abenteuer meiner Jugend.'

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<sup>92</sup><sub>1/21.</sub>



Selin's experience runs parallel to Hauptmann's own.

At the beginning, Selin is on board the ship in the harbour. He is tormented by sensual longings, expressed in erotic visions. However, when he goes ashore to the brothel and sees the creatures there, all temptation is swept away by a flood of pity for them.

'Und wie sie ihm den Leib entgegenrecken,  
die Opfer alle ohne Ruh und Rast,  
da sucht sein weinend Auge Salben, Binden,  
sie um der Wunden Uebermass zu winden.'<sup>93</sup>

He is completely overwhelmed with horror at the scene. His self-absorption vanishes in his pity for these victims.

Selin's emotion is observed by two men, who tell him that he is wasting his sympathy: 'nicht zu den Menschen rechnet man die Buhle.'<sup>94</sup> This remark expresses for Hauptmann the essence of the wrong that is done to the prostitute; she is deprived of her humanity.

Selin turns upon the men and upbraids them bitterly. In attacking them, he attacks a whole society that tolerates the evil of prostitution. In the course of his angry tirade, Hauptmann reveals an attitude towards suffering which runs through many of his social

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<sup>93</sup>1/26;    <sup>94</sup>1/28.

dramas. To the men Selin says:

'So hoch wie Sterne stehen über Dünsten,  
so hoch steht jedes dieser Opfer euch!  
Nie, nie gelingt es, selbst dem Freisten, Kühnsten,  
hinaufzudringen in ihr Leidensreich,  
um wie viel weniger euren faden Künsten?' 95

For Hauptmann, these women are ennobled by their sufferings just as Rose Berndt, for example, is by hers.

It is in their moments of suffering that Hauptmann is most drawn to his fellow men. This is illustrated in the poem, when the two men turn angrily and heap abuse upon Selin. At first he is wounded and angry, but,

'Kaum hat Selin  
den Schmerz in seiner Gegner Brust gelesen,  
kaum sieht er draus des Hasses Blumen blühn,  
so ist er auch von seinem Zorn genesen  
und fühlt von Mitleid seine Brust erglühn.' 96

As soon as he sees the hurt feelings, his anger turns to pity.

Finally Selin encounters in the brothel a girl whose moral sensitivity is not yet dead. He strives to rescue her by offering her a spiritual love instead of demanding from her a sensual one. However, she can no

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95<sub>1/30</sub>; 96<sub>1/31</sub>;

longer believe in the possibility of spiritual love from men. For her, 'Männer sind Strafen Gottes.'<sup>97</sup> The attempt therefore fails.

For the purpose of our theme, the importance of the Malaga episode is that in it Selin's sympathy is drawn outwards to the suffering of others. His social conscience triumphs over his self-pity and make him forget his dreams of grandeur.

But this triumph is not permanent. Soon after, when the ship sets out from Malaga again, we find Selin once more experiencing a type of 'Grössenwahn'. According to his view of his earlier experience, he already carried within him a god, who was the source of his inspiration; this conviction had remained with him even when the vision of grandeur had faded.

'Wohl wohnte ihm ein Gott im Busen immer,  
ein Gott, der, ging sein Haus auch oft in Trümmer,  
allgegenwärtig war und ihn bewegte  
und ihm ins Aug' Begeistrungsfunken legte.'<sup>98</sup>

Now, as a result of the Malaga episode, a new God takes possession of him.

'Nun aber war ein neuer Gott mit Prangen  
ins Heiligtum der Brust ihm eingegangen.  
Aus Lasterfluten, die an ihm zerstoben,  
hat er den neuen Gott herausgehoben.'<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup>1/33; <sup>98</sup>1/42; <sup>99</sup>ibid.



There is a clear distinction between the first ecstatic experience and the second. The first is a sublimation of a longing for personal greatness, springing from the suppression of Hauptmann's individuality; it is an expression of pure individualism and in it the poet raises himself by his creative impulse to the level of a god. The new experience is different.

'Nicht mehr den eignen Leib zum Gott erheben,  
nein, den gefundenen Gott der Menschheit geben,  
der sie heraus aus schwerem Unheilswetter  
zum Lichte führte als ein Vater, Retter.' 100

Whereas the first experience of 'Grössenwahn' is fundamentally connected with self-pity, the second arises from pity for others.

At the same time, the line, 'O Kraftwahn, Kraftwahn, Wonne ohnegleichen!'<sup>101</sup> reveals an underlying individualistic emotion. Although on the surface, Selin/ongs to rescue his fellow men from their suffering, underneath he enjoys the sense of power and greatness which this mission gives him. In this new ecstasy then, there are elements of both individualism and social conscience, and in it, the tension between these two forces is, for the moment, reconciled.

The experience in which this tension is composed, is an important one for Hauptmann. It reappears in

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<sup>100</sup> *ibid.*    <sup>101</sup> 1/43.

Emanuel Quint. There is a certain similarity between Selin and Quint. Selin's first ecstatic dream is prompted entirely by a desire for personal greatness; when Quint first sets out to follow in Christ's footsteps, he does so hoping to become powerful and glorious and so to confound his enemies. Quint later makes himself the humble servant of all - his longing for personal greatness is harnessed to his compassion for his fellow men; this is very similar to Selin's second ecstatic dream.

In addition Selin is possessed by a god:

'Er ist hinein in meine Brust gekommen  
und hat mein Wesen ganz gefangennommen.'<sup>102</sup>

This is apparently an earlier version of Quint's so-called mystic union with Christ.

On board the ship, Selin now sets out to preach his new religion to the crew. Not surprisingly, he is met by scornful laughter; hard words follow, Selin is accused of being a disturber of the peace and, with wounded feelings he retires to his cabin. His mood is expressed in the lines:

'Er martert sich und wälzt in trüben Quellen  
sich hin und her und fragt zu tausend Malen,  
ob er denn wirklich solch ein Unhold wäre,  
der nur der Menschen stillen Frieden störe.

Und wie's zu Ende geht, da will's ihm dünken,  
als sei er wert, im Meere zu versinken.' 103

He is in fact filled with self-pity. The emotion appears as a longing for the security of home, for a refuge far from the hateful world with which he is now surrounded.

'Ihr Menschen alle lasst mich ganz alleine,  
damit ich weine.

Ihr Freundesherzen in der weiten Ferne,  
wie drückt' ich an die trübe Brust euch gerne.  
Du stilles, reines und geduld's ges Lieb,  
wie kam's, dass Tatendrang von dir mich trieb?  
Du stiller Anker in den Menschenlanden  
hast mich verstanden.' 104

If at this point we look back over the emotional development in the poem, we find that it has moved in a kind of cycle through four phases - 1) self-pity, 2) individualistic dreams of grandeur, 3) pity for the suffering of others, 4) a kind of messianic dream in which longings for personal greatness are mingled with humanitarian motives. Now the cycle is closed with a new and intensified self-pity, sharpened by the scorn which Selin has drawn upon himself by telling of his well-intentioned dreams.

The ship now moves on to Naples, and a new but similar emotional cycle begins. In Naples, Selin is

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103<sub>1/48</sub>; 104<sub>ibid.</sub>



completely overwhelmed by the general poverty, misery and vice.

'Selin irrt schauernd durch die schmutz'gen Gassen,  
und schauernd sieht er der Paläste Stolz.  
Nicht kann sein Busen all dies Elend fassen,  
wenn schier sein Auge auch in Tränen schmolz.  
Ihm drückt's die Brust, schwer hebt sich seine Zunge,  
und was sie bebend spricht, ist: Luft und Licht!  
Weil hier das Schicksal wie mit Panthersprunge  
sein leichtes Rettungsfahrzeug ihm zerbricht.' 105

He realises that all his reforming zeal is of no avail here, for it would evoke only anger and spite:

'Und wehe dem, der mit dem Elend rechnet,  
und wehe dem, der mit dem Elend ficht,  
er wird dem schlechtesten gleich geknechtet,  
und seine Geißel saust ihm ins Gesicht.' 106

He is therefore compelled to hide his real feelings, to stifle his protest,

As a result, he is filled with depression; he is overcome by 'Weltschmerz'.

'Da wandte sich Selin und ging von dannen,  
kaum noch ertragend sein gepresstes Herz,  
er warf sich hin, und seine Tränen rannen  
in ungeheuren, namenlosem Schmerz.' 107

At this point, he is completely dominated by his social

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105<sub>1/54</sub>; 106<sub>1/55</sub>; 107<sub>1/56</sub>.

conscience, which is intensified by frustration.

Gradually however, the demands of his inner self begin to reassert themselves, and we move towards the next phase,

'Nach Wochen aber ist Selin genesen,  
vom Mitleid nicht, vorerst vom Rettungswahn.  
Er hat aus seinen Schätzen sich erlesen  
die besten, und in einem schwanken Kahn  
sucht er sie rettend aus dem Sturm zu bringen.' 108

The situation here is similar to one we have already discussed in the first chapter.<sup>109</sup> Hauptmann experienced just this emotion after his illness in Rome, when he felt that he had been sacrificing his own personality for the sake of his social convictions, and that he must now think of himself. Now Selin feels that he must flee from the depression and frustration that beset him. At the same time he cannot do this without some kind of self-justification. He tells himself that he is withdrawing from the struggle only in order to return to it fully prepared and at the right moment.

'Sind deine Scheuern voll, dann kannst du geben  
mit vollen Händen, und man lohnt dir's gut.  
Erst aus dem Saft herbstlich reifer Reben  
steigt süßer Traube heisse Lebensflut.  
Und weiter will es unsren Knaben dünken,

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<sup>108</sup> 1/57; <sup>109</sup> See pp. 26-28, above.

man müsse alles Weh und alles Leid  
um sich vergessen und in sich versinken,  
bis es zu herbsten und zu keltern Zeit.' 110

In this phase then, his individualism appears in the form of an urgent need to escape from the insistent demands of his conscience and this very need reveals the tension between these two forces.

In fact, Selin does not escape immediately; when suddenly surrounded by a band of beggars, he is once more overcome by his compassion. He says to them:

'Ich mag die Sonne nicht, die ihr mir schenkt,  
ich mag die Speise nicht, aus euren Zähnen  
gerissen, aber bei des Himmels Huld  
noch weniger den Trank von euren Tränen,  
am mindesten aber eures Elends Schuld.' 111

In the end however, Selin does escape to Capri, where he slowly recovers under the soothing influence of nature, manifested in the song of the nightingale.

In Capri, Selin encounters the figure of an old man, the spirit of the emperor Tiberius, who epitomises all the sufferings of the persecuted. He tells of his sufferings in these words:

'Mich schmerzt mein Haupt, mich schmerzen die Gebeine,  
ich schleppe mich durch Wind und Wind und Sturm,  
ich schleppe mich bei Sonn' und Mondenscheine,

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110 1/57; 111 1/62.



flieg' wie der Adler, krieche wie der Wurm.  
 Ich möchte sitzen, doch die Dornen stechen,  
 ich möchte liegen, doch das wilde Hirn  
 reißt mich empor, wenn auch die Glieder brechen.  
 Mich schmerzt mein Haupt, mir brennt, mir brennt  
 die Stirn.' 112

Here we have the tortured self-pity of the outcast, but the following line: 'Ich wollte helfen, und ich ward geschlagen', suggest a deeper affinity with Selin. Like Selin, Tiberius too had wished to help his fellow men and had been made to suffer for it.

In Tiberius, the emotion of the outcast is taken a step further, for he is obsessed with lust for revenge:

'Bezahlt, bezahlt! das ist mein einz'ges Denken.  
 Bezahlt, bezahlt! das ist mein einz'ges Glück.  
 Die ganze Welt mit meinem Kummer tränken,  
 schafft mir - nicht einen stillen Augenblick.' 113

Thus the original philanthropic urge has become misanthropic, the very antithesis of the messianic dream, and in the mood there is something of the wounded pride of Lucifer.

The poem ends with Selin committing suicide in despair.

We have seen that Hauptmann feels an affinity with

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112<sub>1/66</sub>; 113<sub>1/67</sub>.

Prometheus, which is derived partly from a sense of insecurity in which he feels himself persecuted by all-powerful forces, and partly from the conviction that he is suffering this because of his compassion for his fellows.

We have seen too that the mood of the 'Promethidenlos' moves through a series of phases, through self-pity, delusions of grandeur, pity for others, through a kind of messianic dream and back to an intensified self-pity; then again from pity to 'Weltschmerz', the urge to save his own personality from the demands of his conscience and finally through more self-pity to a defiant misanthropic thirst for revenge. Both the 'messianic' mood and the final defiance may be regarded as Promethean.

It will now be our task to discover how these moods reappear in Hauptmann's more mature works.

Chapter III  
Insecurity and Presecution Mania  
in Hauptmann's Works.

In our discussion of the 'Promethidenlos', our task was simplified because we were able to identify Hauptmann himself with the hero Selin. This clearly cannot be done in the case of the greater part of Hauptmann's works, particularly those of the naturalistic kind, where the author is deliberately aiming at objectivity and is trying to subordinate his own personality to that of his characters.

How then are we to see Hauptmann himself in these works? F. A. Voigt suggests the answer to this question when he discusses Hauptmann's note-book method in relation to the 'Friedensfest'; he writes: 'Alle diese Notizen sind bei Hauptmann ichbezogen, er nimmt überhaupt nur das auf, was ihm wesensverwandt ist. Ganz und gar liegt es ihm fern, objektivwissenschaftlich "Material" zu sammeln.'<sup>114</sup> We may take it then that the characters in these works in some way represent Hauptmann himself or one of his potential selves, that he is himself like them or might easily be like them in certain circumstances; we may assume also that the situation in which they find themselves is in some way akin to his own.

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<sup>114</sup>Voigt: Hauptmannstudien, p. 56.



In this chapter, we shall be concerned principally with examining the situations confronting some of Hauptmann's heroes.

In his analysis of the structure of Hauptmann's early naturalistic dramas, Paul Fechter shows that the action is precipitated from outside by the arrival of someone from a sphere of life quite different from that of the other characters of the play. This outsider throws out new ideas, new points of view, which disturb the stability of the other order, and bring about conflict. 'Der Kampf fordert Opfer; irgend jemand, ein Mädchen, ein Mann bricht zusammen, weil er aus der Verwirrung keinen Ausweg sieht und im Alten nach dem Blick ins Freie nicht mehr leben kann.'<sup>115</sup> It is the situation of this tragic victim that we must now consider more closely.

In 'Vor Sonnenaufgang', the victim is Helene Krause. Helene is the only sound person in a family of depraved, drunken peasants. Her outlook is broadened by a visitor to the house, Alfred Loth, a young man who communicates to her his ideals of social justice and right living. They fall in love. Helene now realises to the full the moral depravity with which she is surrounded, and sees in Loth her only hope of escape. But Loth at last discovers that Helene is a member of a

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<sup>115</sup>Fechter: Gerhart Hauptmann, p. 39.

family of alcoholics, and fearful of the consequences of heredity on their children, he deserts her. Helene is alone, the only clean, untouched person in a depraved society, which is already reaching out to corrupt her too. She is alone in a world that is closing round her threateningly, and she sees no escape, at least no escape other than death; and this she chooses.

The problem that Hauptmann treats in his 'Friedensfest' is again closely connected with heredity, only this time instead of inherited alcoholism, he deals with the mental and emotional unbalance inherited by the children of ill-matched and emotionally unstable parents. The hero, Wilhelm Scholtz, is a child of such parents. He wishes to marry a healthy and good-hearted girl, Ida Büchner; Wilhelm however sees in himself the same pathological symptoms - warped self-pity and persecution mania - that are manifested by his parents, and which have poisoned the lives of all the members of the family, including the parents. The situation with which he is faced then is this: shall he marry Ida Büchner in the hope of attaining happiness through her but with the probability of bringing upon her, himself and their children the same miseries as have ruined his own family life? Or must he give her up for her own sake, at the same time giving up all hope of his own happiness and resigning himself to the misery of his

own pathological disposition? In this case, Ida Büchner insists on standing by her loved one, and we see them at the end going to face the future together. Whether or not it can be a happy one we must judge for ourselves, but at least there is still hope.

As the title 'Einsame Menschen' suggests, Hauptmann's third play is a tragedy of loneliness. The hero, Johannes Vockerat, was brought up in the narrow-minded atmosphere of Herrnhut, but has at length with great difficulty achieved a certain freedom of thought and breadth of vision; he has even written a scientific work. But as a result of these very achievements he has become spiritually isolated; for he can hope for understanding neither from his wife, a good but simple soul, nor from his parents who, still under the narrow influence of Herrnhut, have the greatest misgivings about their son and his work. For a short time, Johannes gains the sympathy he yearns for from his friendship with the enlightened student, Anna Mahr. But this too is destroyed by the narrow-mindedness of his environment; his family cannot comprehend the platonic basis of his friendship with Anna Mahr and drive her away. Deprived of this sympathy which has now become indispensable to him, Johannes cannot face the loneliness ahead of him; he feels hemmed in by forces which do not understand him



and which hate all that he stands for; as a result he is driven to suicide. As Schlenther points out, Käthe is speaking with the author's voice when she says at the end; 'Mutter! Vater! Ihr habt ihn zum Aussersten getrieben! Warum habt Ihr das getan?' 116

This at least is how Hauptmann meant us to see the tragedy of Johannes. In fact however, he tends to appear so completely devoted to himself and his own vanity, so ruthlessly careless of other people's suffering, particularly his wife's, that he forfeits much of our sympathy, and it becomes difficult to see him as a victim of circumstances, for whom we should feel pity. On the contrary, we feel he really deserves his fate. Here however, we shall accept the play as Hauptmann intended it.

If we now compare the situations that have arisen in these three early plays, we find that they have much in common. Both Helene Krause and Johannes Vockerat feel themselves to be alone and deserted in a world that is completely hostile to them and is closing in to destroy them; they are driven to their death by these hostile forces. The situation of Wilhelm Scholz is different only in that the forces that have cornered him and are threatening him are not external but inside himself. The essential emotional experience revealed in

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116 Schlenther: Gerhart Hauptmann, p. 125.

these recurring situations is intense loneliness, and fear of life amounting to persecution mania. Ruth Bauer may have had this kind of experience in mind when she wrote: 'Dieses Grunderlebnis des Hauptmannschen Menschen beruht in der Erfahrung der Leihhaftigkeit und der Ungeborgenheit des menschlichen Daseins.'<sup>117</sup>

The tragic situation in which a man appears trapped and helpless in face of a malignant fate, or is hounded to his doom, can be seen again and again in Hauptmann's writings, although it may not always occupy the central position in the action.

We may see it in 'Hanneles Himmelfahrt', where the friendless Hannele Mattern is driven by the persistent cruelties of her stepfather to seek escape by trying to drown herself. Florian Geyer meets his end alone, standing at bay, ringed round by enemies. In the 'Versunkene Glocke'<sup>(6)</sup> Meister Heinrich finds himself at the end an outcast from both worlds, hated both in the human society of the valley and the supernatural one of the mountains. Fuhrmann Henschel is trapped by fate into a situation of guilt for which he atones with his life. In his own much quoted word: 'ane Schlinge ward mir gelegt und in die Schlinge da trat ich halt 'nein,' and later, 'Schlecht bin ich gewor'n, bloss ich kann nisch dafter. Ich bin ebens halt aso 'neingetapert.'

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<sup>117</sup>Bauer: Das Menschenbild im Drama Gerhart Hauptmanns, p.1.

Meinswegen kann ich auch schuld sein. Wer weess's! ?  
 Ich hätte ja besser kenn'n Obacht geben. Der Teufel  
 is eben gewitzter wie ich. Ich bin halt bloss <sup>m</sup>imer  
 grad'aus gegangen.'<sup>118</sup> Hauptmann portrays Henschel as  
 a helpless victim of circumstances which seem almost  
 actively to conspire to destroy him.

The death of Arnold Kramer after he has been  
 cruelly persecuted by the Stamtisch company is parti-  
 cularly revealing. His father describes his son's fate  
 thus: 'Sie haben ihn mir zu Tode gehetzt. Erschlagen  
 Lachmann, wie so'n Hund.'<sup>119</sup> Here however, we have a  
 new development in the situation, in that Hauptmann,  
 like Goethe in Werther, attempts to let the victim,  
 even in his death somehow triumph over the forces that  
 have killed him. Arnold Kramer has lived a wasted  
 life; although highly gifted as an artist, he has  
 failed utterly through lack of moral stamina to bring  
 these qualities to fruition. Now, after his death,  
 his father says of him: 'Was jetzt auf seinem Gesichte  
 liegt, das alles, Lachmann, hat in ihm gelegen. Das  
 fühlt' ich, das wusst' ich, das kannt' ich in ihm und  
 konnte ihn doch nicht heben, den Schatz. Sehn Se,  
 nun hat ihn der Tod gehoben. Nun ist alles voll  
 Klarheit um ihn her, das geht von ihm aus, von dem  
 Antlitz, Lachmann, und hör'n Se, ich buhle um dieses

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<sup>118</sup><sub>3/250-251;</sub>    <sup>119</sup><sub>3/440.</sub>



Licht, wie so'n schwarzer, betrunken Schmetterling.  
 Hör'n Se, man wird überhaupt so klein: Das ganze Leben  
 lang war ich sein Schulmeister. Ich habe den Jungen  
 malträtirt, und nun ist er mir so ins Erhabne  
 gewachsen.'<sup>120</sup>

This triumph, based merely on the  
 expression on the face of the dead youth, cannot be  
 regarded as a valid one. Hauptmann may have been aware  
 of this when, almost at the end of the play, he caused  
 Michael Kramer to say of Arnold's persecutors: 'Ihr  
 tatet dasselbe dem Gottessohn! Ihr tut es ihm heut  
 wie dazumal! So wie damals, wird er auch heut nicht  
 sterben!'<sup>121</sup>

Hauptmann here identifies his hero with  
 Christ in order to give him some of Christ's greatness;  
 in this way he hopes to make Arnold's triumph more  
 credible. It may be contended that the thought of  
 Christ comes naturally to Michael Kramer as for years  
 he has been working on a picture of Christ. Yet  
 Arnold is anything but a Christ-like figure, and such  
 a far-fetched parallel does nothing to make his final  
 triumph any more convincing to us. It must remain at  
 most an illusion of the father. Yet the attempt is  
 important as a step towards overcoming this basis  
 feeling of human insecurity.

It is not the first step however. That had  
 already been taken in 'Florian Geyer'. In the final

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<sup>120</sup><sub>3/440;</sub>    <sup>121</sup><sub>3/442.</sub>

scene, just before the hero's death, we read the stage direction: 'Mit dem Stumpf der schwarzen Fahne in der Linken und dem entblößten Schwert in der Rechten steht Florian Geyer in dem Türrehmen. Alle prallen zurück. Stolz, kalt und gefährlich ist sein Blick, als er mit eisiger Ruhe fragt, "Wen suchet ihr?"'<sup>122</sup> By thus quoting Christ's challenge to the soldiers in the Garden of Gethsemane,<sup>123</sup> Hauptmann hopes to give to Florian Geyer something of the divine stature of Christ. Later we find: 'Geyer lacht in unsäglicher Geringschätzung.'<sup>124</sup> With some justification Fechter calls this 'einen ganz leisen Zusatz sentimentalen Theaters':<sup>125</sup> it is not however a theatrical effect for its own sake that Hauptmann is seeking, he is trying, both by his stage directions and by the biblical quotation, to raise his hero above the enemies who surround him, he is trying to make him triumph over defeat and death. But as in the case of Arnold Kramer, the means he adopts are too thin to carry conviction.

Since Hauptmann's 'der arme Heinrich' was written in 1902, at the end of the long period during which he was emotionally torn between his wife Marie and Margarete Marschalk, it is not surprising that the loneliness and insecurity of the human situation are shown in their most extreme form in this play, an adaptation of

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<sup>122</sup><sub>2/456</sub>; <sup>123</sup>John 18. 4; <sup>124</sup><sub>2/457</sub>; <sup>125</sup>Paul Fechter, 'Gerhart Hauptmann' p. 91.

Hartmann's well-known epic. Heinrich, a great and powerful lord, who has been on the point of being betrothed to the emperor's daughter, is suddenly stricken with leprosy. Once well-loved and powerful, Heinrich now finds himself an outcast, he feels himself deserted by all his friends, while his cousin Conrad usurps his position. Under all this pressure, Heinrich's character gradually disintegrates. At first melancholy and self-pitying, he shrinks further and further into himself till in the end he flees to the wilderness, shunning all human society; externally and internally he becomes savage. We hear of him lurking around a farm like a wild animal in search of prey. We hear too that his cousin Conrad has had him officially buried - in effigy of course - in the ancestral vault. This last act, symbolising the complete annihilation of his personality brings Heinrich to the utmost depths of his affliction. For society he no longer exists. He is completely forsaken.

In this play where Hauptmann reaches the depths of the tragic situation of utter loneliness, he also finds a way of overcoming it. Heinrich is cured when he refuses Ottegebe's sacrifice. He escapes from his own loneliness when he recognises that he loves Ottegebe more than himself, that he would rather suffer his own affliction than have her die for him. His own fate is



no longer important to him; by his self-sacrifice he has therefore overcome it. This victory is undoubtedly connected with Hauptmann's recovery from a severe illness and also from the inner conflict caused by his marriage difficulties. The 'Arme Heinrich' was written in the year after Hauptmann moved into Haus Wiesenstein, which he regarded as a sure defence against the world.<sup>126</sup> He felt that here he would conquer his persecution mania.

'Rose Bernd', written in 1903, is a close parallel to 'Fuhrmann Henschel'; like Henschel, Rose feels that she has been trapped into a position of guilt, in her case that of child-murder. Gregor writes of her: 'Und eine ganze Meute von Männern bereitet Rose Bernd den Untergang'.<sup>127</sup> thus showing her as Hauptmann also would have seen her, as a victim hunted down by the pack. The loneliness of her situation is emphasised when in her hour of need she feels herself deserted even by God: 'Da hoa ich wull ernt geschrien und geruffa! Kee' himmlischer Vater hat sich geriehart.'<sup>128</sup> She feels that to be alone and forsaken in suffering is implicit in life itself, and for this reason she kills her child; ''s sullde ni laba! Ich wullte 's ni!! 's sullde ni meine Martern derleida! 's sullde durt bleib'n wo's hiegeheert.'<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> See above pp. 40-41, Hauptmann' p. 339;  
<sup>128</sup> 4/280;

<sup>127</sup> Joseph Gregor, 'Gerhart

<sup>129</sup> 4/284.

The symbol of the pack hunting down its weaker quarry, reappears in 'Gabriel Schillings Flucht'. In that play, Lucie Heil speaks for the author, when she comments on Schilling, who has left his sick-bed to seek death in the sea: 'Flucht! begreiflicherweise Flucht!'<sup>130</sup> and later: 'Wenn Schilling wirklich geflohen ist... nein, nicht mehr... nicht mehr wie die Jagdhunde nachlaufen!'<sup>131</sup>

The theme of 'Gabriel Schillings Flucht' is akin to that of 'Der arme Heinrich', in so far as here too we see a human soul threatened with annihilation. Hauptmann set a Plutarch quotation before his play: 'Einige versichern, Eunost<sup>2</sup> sei ihnen begegnet, ans Meer eilend, um sich zu baden, weil ein Weib sein Heiligtum betreten habe.'<sup>132</sup> In the course of the play we see Schilling striving to keep intact the inner shrine of his individuality, struggling against the two women who are seeking to gain complete possession of him. This is shown by Schilling's pleading words to Hanna Elias: 'Lass mich! Verfolge mich einige Wochen, einige Monate lang nicht! Die Sache ist die: Ich bin nicht mehr ich! Mein ganzes Wesen, meine ganze ursprüngliche Art zu sein, ist durch das Leben mit dir umgebildet; glaube mir, dass ich mir selber entfremdet bin. Ich bin alledem entrückt und entfremdet worden, womit und wozu

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<sup>130</sup>5/88;    <sup>131</sup>5/90;    <sup>132</sup>5/2.

ich geboren bin und wodurch ich allein existiere und wachse. Das hab' ich verloren, das suche ich nun.<sup>133</sup>

Torn between these two women, Schilling is in danger of losing his own soul, his own individuality, and in the end he seeks refuge in death.

By his suicide, Schilling puts himself into sharp contrast with Heinrich von Aue. Both men are at the point where they feel their inmost personality being extinguished by hostile forces. Both are desperate to defend this ultimate shrine of their ego. As we have seen, Heinrich von Aue refuses to save himself at the expense of Ottegebe's life, and by this act of self-sacrifice, paradoxically saves himself. With Gabriel Schilling it is the other way round. His suicide is essentially an act of self-glorification; by killing himself he is in fact asserting himself in a final gesture of defiance, even if this gesture involves the destruction of the ego. In this he is like Arnold Kramer and to a greater or lesser degree, like all the other Hauptmann heroes who commit or contemplate suicide, characters like Selin, Helene Krause, Johannes Vockerat, Hannele Mattern and Meister Heinrich, to name only a few. Florian Geyer too, although he did not commit suicide, is also related to them, for at his death he was filled with the same desperate defiance, the defiance

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<sup>133</sup><sub>5/41</sub>.



of Lucifer.

In 'Der Bogen des Odysseus' we again meet a situation in which an individual soul is threatened with extinction, this time by daemonic forces within itself. When Odysseus returns, a beggar, to Ithaca, he feels that he is no longer himself. He resembles Heinrich von Aue in that he too is almost buried before he is dead, for he hears his son Telemachus planning to build a Cenotaph for him and springs up shouting: 'Begrabe mich: Ich bin Odysseus!'.<sup>134</sup> Immediately after, the situation is

made clear in these words of Odysseus:

'Doch wer, wer bin ich? Ist  
nicht meine Tat von mir entflohn und steht  
fern, zwischen Göttern, am gestirnten Himmel,  
fremd meiner Seele? Und ich hocke hier,  
ein Bündel schlechter Lumpen! Wandte sich  
mein eignes Fleisch und Blut nicht schaudernd von mir,  
als ich, ich selbst zu sein, mir angemasst?  
Ist nicht mein Sohn so fremd mir wie mein Ruhm?  
Und ich bin hier, um Sohn und Ruhm zu betteln.'<sup>135</sup>

This motif is pursued to its logical conclusion later in the same scene, when Odysseus, on being asked who he is, insists that he is 'Niemand'.<sup>136</sup> He has all but lost his identity.

Odysseus however succeeds in conquering the forces

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<sup>134</sup>8/37; <sup>135</sup>8/38; <sup>136</sup>8/41.

which threaten him. A feeble beggar when he first returns to Ithaca, he gradually gains strength from the mysterious powers of his native soil, of which he says in Act I:

'Ja, hier ist -

Gold - nicht Erde... ist Ambrosia -  
nicht Erde... Nein, nur Erde ist's!  
Nicht schlechtes Gold und nicht Ambrosia.  
Nur Erde! Erde! -

Sieh, hier dieser Staub  
ist köstlicher als Purpur, köstlicher  
als alle Frachten der Phönizier,  
ist wundervoller als Kalypsos Bett,  
süßer als Kirkes Leib, der Zauberin,  
und schmeichlerischer anzufühlen! Biete  
mir Helena - ich bin ein Bettler, habe  
nichts ausser diesen Lumpen - , biete mir  
die heilige Troja, wie sie ging und stand:  
Ein Korn von diesem Staube wiegt sie auf!'<sup>137</sup>

Refreshed from the original source of his strength, Odysseus regains his old stature and, a demi-god once more, wreaks vengeance upon the suitors of Penelope and wins back his own. Voigt explains the significance of this play, as compared with the earlier dramas when he writes: 'Odysseus tut das, wozu die Helden der

früheren Dramen nicht fähig waren, vor allem nicht Gabriel Schilling. Er befreit sich nach namenlosen und entsetzlichen Kämpfen des Körpers und der Seele von dem ihn niederziehenden Dämon, der ihn zum "Niemand" machen will, er befreit sich davon durch Kraft und Tat, durch Töten und Mord.<sup>138</sup> 'Der Bogen des Odysseus' must then be regarded along with 'Der Arme Heinrich' as an important step along Hauptmann's way; both plays show us the victory of the individual soul over the forces which endanger it.

Yet this victory is neither final nor conclusive as far as Hauptmann himself is concerned. 'Der Bogen des Odysseus' was completed in 1912; but very soon after, in the years 1914 and 1915, Hauptmann was at work on his 'Magnus Garbe', which is one of the most despairing of all his works. In it he shows the terrible precariousness of human fortune, portraying in Felicia Garbe the innocent victim of the most ghastly tortures. The play seems to manifest a complete loss of faith in the goodness and justice of life. At the end of the play, Garbe repeats: 'Es ist kein Gott, es ist nur der Teufel.'<sup>139</sup> This sums up the nightmarish sense of abandonment that pervades the whole.

One of the most striking aspects of this work is the rôle of the mob, ignorant, superstitious, and when

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<sup>138</sup>Voigt, 'Antike und antikes Lebensgefühl im Werke Gerhart Hauptmanns' p. 72;

<sup>139</sup>8/193.



whipped up by the Inquisition, vicious and dangerous. The mob is constantly in the background of the play, never appearing, yet always threatening the security of the individual as represented by Magnus Garbe and his wife. Nor can there be any question here of any kind of victory for the individual soul. The play ends in utter gloom, the only spark of hope being the narrow escape of Felicia's newly born son.

That this play reflects the author's own experience is revealed by Behl when he quotes Hauptmann as saying of his 'Magnus Garbe': 'Ich hätte das Stück nicht schreiben können, wenn nicht die schwere Krankheit Margaretes und das Kesseltreiben gegen mich wegen des Breslauer Festspiels vorausgegangen wären.'<sup>140</sup> Hauptmann was commissioned by the corporation of the City of Breslau to write to commemorate the centenary of the Wars of Liberation. In 1913 the 'Festspiel in deutschen Reimen' was produced in Breslau, and was at once greeted by a storm of protest throughout Germany. So strong was the opposition that the play had to be withdrawn. The parallel between Magnus Garbe and Hauptmann himself is clear enough; Garbe attacked the Inquisition; Hauptmann in his 'Festspiel' protested against the militarism of the contemporary regime; Garbe was attacked and overwhelmed when the Inquisition roused the mob against him;

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<sup>140</sup> Behl, 'Zwiesprache mit Gerhart Hauptmann' p. 91.

Hauptmann was attacked by the society of his day, and he too was overcome in that the play was withdrawn. The despair of Magnus Garbe then, is Hauptmann's own despair, intensified from without by the outbreak of war. Into his play he puts some of the loneliness and helplessness he felt in face of the wave of popular anger and hatred unloosed against him by the 'Festspiel'. In writing 'Magnus Garbe' he must have felt too some of the desperate, proud defiance, of which we have spoken in connection with his treatment of suicide.<sup>141</sup>

So far in this chapter, we have dealt only with Hauptmann's dramas, but our survey would not be complete without some reference to his great novels, 'Der Narr in Christo Emanuel Quint', and 'Der Ketzer von Soana'.

The thread which we have been following is particularly clear in Quint, whom we see again and again persecuted by the authorities, mishandled by the mob, and misunderstood by all, a man whose career culminates in a journey through Germany, an outcast forsaken by his former disciples, and turned away from door after door when he claims to be Christ, and who dies at last in utter loneliness in the Alpine snows. It appears also in 'Der Ketzer von Soana', where we find the family of the Scarabotas who live as outcasts upon the mountain, and who are driven away with stones if they

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<sup>141</sup>See above pp. 77-78.

dare to set foot in the village, and where in the end the priest Francesco is torn from his altar by the mob of incensed villagers, who drive him away with sticks and stones; he survives, it is true, and we see him in the goatherd Ludovico, but he remains an outcast from the village.

We have now followed the development of this motif up to 1918, the date of the publication of 'Der Ketzer von Soana', that is up to Hauptmann's fifty-sixth year. The thread however, can be followed right to the end.

It can be seen in the sufferings of Dorothea Angermann (1925) and in her words: 'Das Leben selbst ist die Brutalität', <sup>142</sup> which sum up her life. Seduced at an early age and forced into marriage, from then on she is a helpless pawn in the hands of fate, which drags her down from one degradation to another until she at last commits suicide. We find it also in 'Vor Sonnenuntergang', in which the seventy-year-old Geheimrat Matthias Clausen falls in love with a young girl; Clausen's children set up the most strenuous opposition to the match, eventually going so far as to put their father under tutelage, although he is perfectly sound both mentally and physically; at this point we find an old symbol revived, for Clausen in his rage demands of his children: 'Wo ist mein Sarg?... Ich will meinen

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<sup>142</sup><sub>10/244.</sub>



Sarg sehen! Meinen Sarg! Ihr habt ihn doch mitgebracht?!"<sup>143</sup> Clausen eventually escapes, but he is already broken by the mental suffering he has undergone. 'Meine Seele ist tot', he says of himself not long before he takes his own life.<sup>144</sup> Professor Geiger undoubtedly speaks for Hauptmann when he says: 'Mir ist, als sähe ich einen, der einem Schuss aus dem Hinterhalt zum Opfer gefallen ist.'<sup>145</sup>

'Vor Sonnenuntergang' was completed in 1931, but the strand we have been following appears again in the fragment, 'Der neue Christophorus', which was published in 1943, that is three years before Hauptmann's death. Here the author seems to express the emotion that must have lain behind the works we have been discussing. He writes of the boy Erdmann: 'Eine der frühesten Empfindungen, deren Erdmann sich bewusst wurde, gipfelte in dem Gedanken, er sei irgendwohin verstossen, in irgendeine ungeheuere Fremdheit ausgesetzt, womit er sich allerdings in ganz anderem, nicht nur irdischem Sinne dem, was Gargi mit ihm unternommen hätte,<sup>146</sup> annäherte. Es gab kein Zurück; man war ausgesetzt; in einer Fremdheit - sie hiess eines Tages Welt - hatte man sich zurecht zu finden. Das war eine harte, gewaltige Aufgabe, die in unzählige einzelne auseinander fiel, deren viele alltäglich gelöst werden mussten....Dass man

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<sup>143</sup>11/667; <sup>144</sup>11/685; <sup>145</sup>11/695; <sup>146</sup>When Erdmann was an infant, Gargi, his nurse, had exposed him, and he was saved only just in time.

nun aus einem Paradiese verstoßen ward, mochte richtig sein. Alsdann aber war hierorts die Hölle, in der sich das Menschenleben abspielte.<sup>147</sup>

This last quotation sums up for us the essence of the mood of depression, in which Hauptmann is tortured by extreme loneliness and a deep sense of insecurity and danger. Under its influence, he sees man hemmed in by all-powerful forces bent on his destruction, or he sees him as the quarry fleeing before the pack; his fate becomes a cunning, treacherous thing, ensnaring him in order to destroy him. In face of all this, the individual plays for the most part a passive rôle, a meek victim accepting his doom. In the end he usually commits suicide; yet often, for example in the case of Arnold Kramer, this suicide may be seen as an act of desperate defiance, and certainly there is something of this feeling in Hauptmann's obsession with the theme of suicide. For a time, under the influence of what he loved to call the 'Rinascimento der vierziger Jahre', Hauptmann partially conquered his despair, which is clearly a form of persecution mania; then he saw the individual triumphing over his fate, as in 'Der arme Heinrich', and 'Der Bogen des Odysseus'. The victory however was not complete or lasting, and we can trace situations, themes and emotions coloured by

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<sup>147</sup>Der neue Christophorus, p. 88.

persecution mania up to the late works of his  
life.



Chapter IVSocial Conscience and 'Eros'.

We have already discussed the origins of Hauptmann's social conscience in his childhood impressions of village life; we have seen how the sympathies then formed developed in the Lederose period to a more consciously critical attitude towards society. The class hatred which he then encountered aroused in him a sense of dissatisfaction that made him emotionally ripe for his meeting with Alfred Ploetz at Breslau in 1880.

The ideas that were current in the Ploetz circle were not particularly original; the social problems in which they were interested were being discussed generally at that time; Hauptmann's part was not in any case to contribute new ideas; what was characteristic of him was the intensity with which he felt about the social question. It is this emotional quality in Hauptmann's attitude that made Adalbert von Hanstein write of him later: 'Bei alledem habe ich nie einen Menschen gesehen, dem das soziale Empfinden mehr in Fleisch und Blut, ja in das ganze Nervensystem übergegangen war, als ihm.'<sup>148</sup>

The basic emotionalism that governed Hauptmann's view of society may be seen in many of the earlier poems. It is apparent in the 'Promethidenlos', most clearly perhaps in the Malaga brothel, where Selin is almost

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<sup>148</sup> Adalbert von Hanstein: 'Gerhart Hauptmann, eine Skizze,' p.8.

consciously seeking an outlet for his pity and goes from one inmate to the other looking for someone whom he may save by his love; the situation becomes almost comic when, after hurling abuse at two of the clients because of their callousness, he ends by pitying them because he has hurt their feelings.<sup>149</sup>

The same pity is evident too in many of the poems collected in 'Das bunte Buch'. For example in the poem 'Im Nachtzug', he shows that he is aware of the bitter hatreds felt by the workers; Hauptmann is still moved to pity. He calls upon the poet of the machine age:

'o beuge dich nieder

zum Herzen der Armen, mitleidig und mild,  
und was es dir zitternd und weinend enthüllt,  
ersteh' es in Tönen dir wieder!'<sup>150</sup>

In 'Mein Kampf', Hauptmann sees his poetic mission related to the social problem:

'ich bin ein Sänger jenes düstern Tales,  
wo alles Edle beim Ergreifen schwindet,  
wo schwarzen Dunstes träge Massen rollen  
und mit dem Lichte ohne Ende kämpfen,  
wo Wolken nur den hellen Blitz gebären,  
wo ein gigantisch ruheloses Wollen  
sich stöhnend windet in gewalt'gen Krämpfen  
und sich die Freuden von den Leiden nähren!'<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> See above p. 55; <sup>150</sup> 1/116; <sup>151</sup> 1/122-123.

In the last stanza Hauptmann declares that it is his task to denounce the social evils that cause the sufferings of the poor, but it is in the second last that his pity is <sup>s</sup>most evident:

'Du aber, Volk der ruhelosen Bürger,  
 du arm<sup>e</sup>s Volk, zu dem ich selbst mich zähle,  
 das sei mir ferne, dass ich deiner fluche!  
 Durch deine Reihen gehen tausend Würger,  
 und dass ich dich, ein neuer Würger, quäle,  
 verhüt' es Gott, den ich noch immer suche!' 152

There is running through this stanza, a certain self-conscious quality, that is not altogether attractive. The second line too, in which Hauptmann numbers himself among the poor, suggests that he pities himself along with them.

This connection between social conscience and self-pity may be seen also in many of the social dramas, where, as we have seen, the hero or heroine often embodies Hauptmann's own tendency towards self-pity or persecution mania. For example in 'Vor Sonnenaufgang' Helene is shown as the victim of the social evils with which she is surrounded and she calls forth our pity; at the same time she is an expression of Hauptmann's own insecurity, and when he pities her, he also pities himself in her. We may say the same of most of the



heroes of the social dramas, notably Johannes Vockerat, Wilhelm Scholz, Hannele. The confused emotion that was the basis of Hauptmann's social pity is akin to that expressed in the 'Apostel', where we find a melting love of all creation associated with intense egoism.

In his novel 'Wanda', Hauptmann describes a conscience such as his own, Paul Haake's 'wunden Punkt', and gives a detailed account of its growth; Haake himself says: 'Ich habe in mir diesen wunden Punkt, seit ich bei Bewusstsein bin. Nicht Pflaster, nicht Balsam konnte ihn zuheilen. Als ich einmal als Kind von einem Passanten fünfzig Pfennig geschenkt bekommen hatte, traf es sofort den wunden Punkt. Ich konnte mich nicht darüber freuen, unter der Bitterkeit darüber, dass ich sie angenommen hatte. Aber mein Hunger forderte das. Wenn meine Mutter das Essen verteilte und ich sah, dass meine Ration die der anderen noch kleiner machte, brannte und schmerzte während des Essens der wunde Punkt. Mitunter wurde mir dann so übel, als müsste ich alles wieder herausgeben. Wenn jemand die Arbeiter vaterlandsloses Gesindel nannte, so traf es wieder den wunden Punkt. Ich wusste ja, wie mein Vater sich im Leben für die übrige Menschheit abgerackert hatte. Da raste förmlich die Wunde in mir, weil er trotzdem so verachtet war und so beschimpft werden konnte. Der wunde Punkt, der wunde Punkt. Ich brauche an eine alte

Waschfrau zu denken, die meine Mutter ist. Alles, was sie an Verachtung und moralischer Roheit von den höheren Ständen zu erfahren hatte, traf natürlich den wunden Punkt. Alles trifft da eben den wunden Punkt. Später waren es dann wieder andere Sachen. Dass es Leute gibt, welche zweimalhunderttausend und mehr Morgen Wald besitzen, und deren Förster armen Kindern, die Preiselbeeren und Blaubeeren suchen, mit Schrot um die Ohren knallen dürfen - ja, da treffen eben alle Schrotkörner mir den wunden Punkt. Wenn ich sehe, dass es einen Adel gibt, was die Folge hat, dass ich mich ihm gegenüber als ein Halbtier empfinden sollte, so trifft der Gedanke einer solchen Erniedrigung meinen wunden Punkt. Auch das trifft meinen wunden Punkt, wenn man die Masse des Volkes, wie täglich geschieht, mit Worten beleidigt. Man beleidigt da zwar höchstens einen Begriff; denn das Wort Volk und das Wort Masse ist gewiss von achtzig Millionen Menschen nicht der Inbegriff. Aber achtzig Millionen Menschen mit ihren Leiden, ihren Schicksalen, ihren hohen Verdiensten um das Ganze sind doch getroffen und empfinden die Misshandlung. Dass wir hier tafeln und uns wohl sein lassen, ist sehr schön, aber es trifft auch meinen wunden Punkt. Wir haben bei dieser einen Sitzung mindestens das ausgegeben, was mein Vater und meine Mutter bei einer Arbeit von zehn Stunden täglich, ja von zwölf, von achtzehn Stunden

täglich im Schweiss ihres Angesichts in einem Monat verdient haben. Und wenn ich nun ein grosser Herr werde und mich von meinen Leuten dort Abschied nehme und zu ihren Ausbeutern übergehe, so trifft das wiederum meinen wunden Punkt.<sup>153</sup>

This passage illustrates admirably the development of an emotional social conscience such as Hauptmann himself possessed. If we analyse the development, we find that Haake's first feelings are self-pity and injured pride, a resentment of his own weakness and dependence upon others, something of the sense of insecurity which we discussed in the previous chapter; he then begins to feel similarly for others, first of all for his parents - his most immediate circle - but soon for anyone in the same plight as himself, for all the under-privileged, in short with all those with whom he can identify himself. The pity he felt originally for himself becomes transferred to others. He continues to feel it when he himself has escaped from the poverty and helplessness which originally caused the emotion, and now it takes on the appearance of conscience.

The deep compassion that Hauptmann showed towards the victims of society was frequently a disguised and unconscious manifestation of his obsession with his own insecurity, and it is easily understandable that this

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<sup>153</sup> 11/99-101.



feeling should appear to Adalbert von Hanstein to have become a part of Hauptmann himself, to have entered his 'flesh and blood'.<sup>154</sup>

Since his approach is emotional, it is not surprising that Hauptmann had few new ideas to contribute towards a solution of the social question. In 'Vor Sonnenaufgang', he made Alfred Loth put forward all the views of the Ploetz group - in themselves not very new; but after this Hauptmann never used his works explicitly to advocate any particular programme of social reform. Nevertheless he did hope to bring about some change in social attitudes through his works. Max Baginski, who accompanied Hauptmann on a journey through the weaver districts of Silesia, gathering material for 'Die Weber', questioned him on this point: 'Ich frage Hauptmann, welche Wirkung er sich von seinem Theaterstück verspreche, das dieses Schicksal zu dramatischer künstlerischer Darstellung bringt. Er antwortet, seine Neigungen zögen ihn mehr Sommernachtsträumen, sonnigen Ausblicken entgegen, aber ein harter innerer Druck treibe ihn dazu an, diese Not zum Gegenstand seiner Kunst zu machen. Die erhoffte Wirkung? Die Menschen sind nicht gefühllos. Auch der Behagliche, Reiche muss sich im Innersten betroffen fühlen, wenn er solche Bilder entsetzlichen Menschenjammers vor seinen Augen

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<sup>154</sup>See above p. 87.

aufsteigen sieht. Alles Menschliche stehe im Zusammenhang. Meinen Einwand, dass das Besitzrecht den darin Wohnenden Scheuklappen vor die Augen zu legen pflegt, will er nicht als allgemein berechtigt gelten lassen. Es ergibt sich, er will das werktätige Mitgefühl in den Gutgestellten erwecken. Mitleid, freilich ein tatkräftiges Mitleid, das den Armen eine wirkliche Erleichterung ihres Loses verschafft. Er fügt hinzu, ihn selbst habe zuzeiten die Not der Massen so gepeinigt, dass es ihm nicht möglich war, seine Mahlzeiten ruhig einzunehmen, die oft auch während der Studentenzeit, karg genug gewesen seien. In solchen Augenblicken sei schon eine Tasse Kaffee als beschämender Luxus erschienen.<sup>155</sup>

It is clear from this that Hauptmann was hoping to awake in others the same kind of compassion for human suffering that he himself felt. This same hope motivated all the other works that dealt with social questions, and in which Hauptmann protested against the cruelty and injustices in the world. In this way, by implication, he called for the emancipation of women, justice for the oppressed, mercy for the weak and helpless, understanding for criminals; he fought against prostitution, alcoholism, selfish materialism, against violence of any kind, particularly the violence of war. To quote Frank Thiess, 'Das Lebenswerk

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<sup>155</sup>Quoted by Hans von Hülssen, 'Gerhart Hauptmann', pp. 70-71.

Hauptmanns ist ein einziger grosser Versuch gewesen, den Menschen durch rücksichtslose Aufdeckung seines Leides zur Erkenntnis der Mittel zu führen, durch die wir uns von ihm befreien: Gerechtigkeit, Verzeihen und Liebe.<sup>156</sup> It is an exaggeration to claim that all of Hauptmann's work is devoted towards this end, but nevertheless the statement rightly stresses his preoccupation with human suffering.

Hans Marschan too discusses the effect Hauptmann hoped to achieve by evoking pity. He writes: 'Er (Hauptmann) kennt keine "schlechten" Menschen, sondern mehr oder weniger unglücklich veranlagte. Wenn der Mensch etwas tut, was der Ordnung zuwiderläuft, so sollte er dafür nicht der Strafe überantwortet werden - er konnte ja nicht anders handeln, ja er wusste mitunter gar nicht, was er tat - , sondern durch werktätiges Mitleid sollte ihm geholfen werden! Alle Menschen werden Brüder; aber nicht wie bei Schiller-Beethoven durch die gemeinsame Freude, sondern durch das gemeinsame Leid. Denn das Leid ist das Wesen der Welt, und aus dieser seiner Erkenntnis heraus das Mitleid das Wesen der Dichtung.'<sup>157</sup> The pity that Hauptmann hoped to awake, was to bring men together, to make them brothers.

The deep disunity in the social structure had

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<sup>156</sup>,Gerhart Hauptmann. Sieben Reden gehalten zu seinem Gedächtnis', p. 46;

<sup>157</sup>Marschan, 'Das Mitleid bei Gerhart Hauptmann', p. 27-28.



shocked Hauptmann even in Lederose. It was the bitterness and hatred caused by social injustices that distressed him as much as the injustices themselves. In 'Die Weber' he shows the barriers of prejudice and intolerance that divide the classes, that blunt the sympathy of the farmers, the factory owners, the middle classes generally for the misery of the weavers.

Gregor writes of the first act: 'Eine uralte Kluft ist aufgerissen. Es ist nicht die zwischen arm und reich - nie kann das genug betont werden. Das wäre viel zu wenig. Es ist die zwischen menschlichem Leiden und unmenschlicher Härte, die leider in den sechzig Jahren, die dieses Stück zählt, noch keinerlei Ueberbrückung gefunden hat.'<sup>158</sup> Hauptmann believed that the only hope for society was to bridge this gulf. He thought that the Christian religion ought to do something towards this end, and again and again he criticised the orthodox clergy because, instead of trying to arouse the pity of the wealthy and powerful for the poor, they did their utmost to perpetuate a social order in which they themselves had a great stake, but which they contended was divinely ordained in spite of its manifest injustice. Against the self-centred callousness of the clergy, Hauptmann sets the apparently selfless all-embracing love of an Emanuel Quint.

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<sup>158</sup>Gregor 'Gerhart Hauptmann' p. 270;

It was because he was painfully conscious of the divisions in German society that Hauptmann wrote his 'Florian Geyer'. Fechter writes of this play: 'Florian Geyer ist die Tragödie der deutschen Eigenbrödelei, der jahrhundertealten, wie es scheint, unüberwindbaren deutschen Unfähigkeit, aus der Isolierung der eigenen Welt in das Ganze einzugehen. Er ist die Tragödie der Eigensucht und der ewigen deutschen Zwietracht.'<sup>159</sup> In his 'Florian Geyer', Hauptmann hoped to give to the German people a national drama which would awaken longings for real unity and to that extent help to demolish the barriers between the classes. The initial failure caused him the bitterest disappointment.

The effect that Hauptmann hopes to achieve by arousing the pity of his audience, is ultimately the same as that which Meister Heinrich wishes to achieve by means of his bell. To the village clergyman he attempts to explain his ambition in these terms:

'Und nun erklingt mein Wunderglockenspiel  
in süßen, brünstig süßen Lockelaute,  
dass jede Brust erschluchzt vor weher Lust:  
es singt ein Lied, verloren und vergessen,  
ein Heimatlied, ein Kinderliebeslied,  
aus Märchenbrunnentiefen aufgeschöpft,  
gekannt von jedem, dennoch unerhört.  
Und wie es anhebt, heimlich, zehrend-bang,

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<sup>159</sup>Fechter 'Gerhart Hauptmann', pp. 84-85.

bald Nachtigallenschmerz, bald Taubenlachen -  
 da bricht das Eis in jeder Menschenbrust,  
 und Hass und Groll und Wut und Qual und Pein  
 zerschmilzt in heissen, heissen, heissen Tränen.<sup>160</sup>

Here Hauptmann expresses the hopes and ambitions that prompted much of his work, in particular the social dramas. He wanted to break down the prejudices that stand in the way of any social progress. The elemental fervour, however, which Heinrich is trying to call forth, and which is to sweep aside the barriers between, is something more than pity.

The same theme appears again in the 'Festspiel in deutschen Reimen'. Athene Deutschland explains her mission in these lines:

'und alldurchdringend, mich durchdringend allzugleich,  
 erkenn' ich meines Daseins, meiner Waffen Sinn:  
 Die Tat des Friedens ist es, nicht die Tat des Kriegs!  
 Die Wohltat ist es! Nimmermehr die Missetat!  
 Was andres aber ist des Krieges nackter Mord?  
 So ruf' ich euch denn auf, ihr eines anderen Krieges  
 Krieger! Ihr, nicht Tod bringend, Leben Schaffende!  
 Des heiligen Werkzeugs goldne Waffe schenkt' ich euch,  
 die volle Frucht aus steinigem Grund zu schöpfen, und  
 ich machte euch zu Ringern mit dem Wahn. Ich hob  
 des blinden Hasses Binde euch vom Auge los.  
 Ich machte euch zu Liebenden. Ich wies euch an,



Pfade zu treten mit des Friedens lieblichen  
 bekränzten Füßen. Breite Strassen lehrt' ich euch  
 auswerfen für der Liebe Bruderschritt. Ich hiess  
 die Kluft, die unversöhnliche, verstummen und  
 die Trennende sich fügen in das Brückenjoch.  
 Nun eint sich über Klüfte hin so Mensch zu Mensch  
 wie Volk zu Volk. Beladne Karawanen ziehn.

künstlich belastet, ausser mit der Zwietracht Last.<sup>161</sup>

The barriers that Hauptmann would wish to break down are those that divide nations as well as those between individuals; the passage implies obvious criticism of the militarism of contemporary imperial Germany - which helps to explain the hostility with which the play was received.

A little later Hauptmann is more specific about this elemental force which he hopes will sweep away hatred and prejudice. Again it is Athene Deutschland who speaks:

'Was trennt, ist Irrtum, Irrtum, der allein den Hass  
 entfesselt, ist Unwissenheit, ist nackte Not  
 des Hungers! Nicht, was Göttliches im Menschen  
 wohnt.

Denn dieses Göttliche ist Eros! Eros ist  
 der Schaffende, der Schöpfer! Alles, was da lebt,  
 ist Eros, ward aus Eros, wirkt in ihm und zeugt

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<sup>161</sup> 7/489-490.

ihn neu. Und Eros zeugt sie immer neu, die Welt! -  
 Was ist der Sinn des Auges ohne ihn? Nur er  
 entschleiert Schönheit: dem Gehör wie dem Gesicht,  
 so dem Geruch wie dem Gefühl und nicht zuletzt  
 dem blitzbeschwingten, die Unendlichkeit im Nu  
 durchmessenden Gedanken. Bessere Diener haben  
 Götter nicht.

Und darum lasst uns Eros feiern! Darum gilt  
 der fleischgewordenen Liebe dieses Fest, die sich  
 auswirkt im Geist! Und aus dem Geiste wiederum  
 in Wort und Ton, in Bildnerei aus Erz und Stein,  
 in Mass und Ordnung, kurz in Tat und Tätigkeit.  
 Und also folgt mir in des deutschen Domes Liebesnacht  
 zu jenem Wunder, das untrüglich euch mein Wort  
 das heiligste euch nennt, das uns beschieden ist.  
 Doch euch nicht brauch' ich nennen, was ihr selber ja,  
 ein brennend Glück, in eures Herzens Herzen tragt.<sup>162</sup>

The unifying principle then, is Eros. It does more than  
 unify however; it is also the inspiration of the artist,  
 the divine creative spark in man, indeed it is the  
 creative force of the very universe. Here Hauptmann  
 appears to have adopted some of the ideas of Nietzsche,  
 and tried to combine them with the profound pity, re-  
 jected by Nietzsche, without which he believes human  
 suffering, whether caused by social injustice or wars,

cannot be relieved. He is attempting to make something like the Christian Caritas arise out of the pagan Eros.

Hauptmann had been groping towards this conception of love some time before. The topic is discussed in a prose fragment, 'Das Fest', which was written in 1900. In the following passage, 'the poet' is explaining a point of view put forward by 'the doctor': 'Er wollte wahrscheinlich auf jenen nicht mehr ganz neuen Gedanken hinaus, dass es im Grunde nur eine Art Liebe gäbe und ihre verschiedenen Formen nichts weiter seien als Gradunterschiede. Dass also die Elternliebe, die Liebe zweier Geschwister, die Liebe von Freunden untereinander, die Liebe der Nonne zum himmlischen Bräutigam, die Liebe des Mönches zur himmlischen Braut und schliesslich die Liebe von Mann zu Weib und von Weib zu Mann schlechthin aus ein und derselben Wurzel stammen. Kinder, ich glaube, dass es so ist.'<sup>163</sup> From this point of view, all love is one, and includes, at the one extreme, the physical, sensual love we normally associate with Eros, and the purely spiritual love of Caritas, at the other; it all derives from the same root; for Hauptmann this is Eros.

The power of Eros, as Hauptmann saw it, is admirably illustrated in two of his later works; it is shown in the novel, 'Die Insel der grossen Mutter', where, at the

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<sup>163</sup>Quoted by Voigt in 'Antike und antikes Lebensgefühl', p. 45.



end, the artificial barriers dividing the nebulous religiosity of the women's state from the hard materialism of the men's, are suddenly swept aside, and the inhabitants meet and merge in an orgy of love; it is seen also in the play, 'Die Tochter der Kathedrale', in which the final reconciliation between the two duchies at war is brought about by the power of Eros. It is

'der kleine Gott,

der Älter ist als Zeus und Uranos -

und mächtiger als sie und alle Götter!' 164

who puts an end to the hatred and violence.

The sentiment of pity that Hauptmann wished to evoke in his early works, and which he hoped would help to remove some of the evils of society, developed into something much wider; pity became a characteristic of Eros, the force that bound men together in mutual love, reconciling their quarrels and overcoming their prejudices, making them see one another as brothers in suffering, equally in need of help and sympathy.

Langner sums up Hauptmann's view of pity in these terms: 'Bei ihm wird Mitleid zum Umlaut kosmischer Schicksalgemeinschaft. Einen Weg der Befreiung aus dieser Lebensgebundenheit gibt es nicht. Die Menschheit steht insgesamt wie unter einem kosmischen Fluch. Das ist die Verwandtschaft kosmischer Art, die sich im

gegenseitigen Mitleiden aussert. Im "Urschmerz",  
"Urweh"... - Worte, die der Dichter oft braucht! -  
findet sich die Menschheit verbunden; sie findet  
sich im Mitleid.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Langner, 'Die Religion Gerhart Hauptmanns', p. 11.

Chapter VIndividualism and Social Conscience  
in 'Till Eulenspiegel'.

In the previous chapter, we said that it was an exaggeration to claim that the whole of Hauptmann's work had the object of revealing the sources of human suffering and of showing men how to free themselves from it.<sup>166</sup> In fact, as we have already seen in our study of the 'Promethidenlos', there is a phase in which Hauptmann turns his back upon the demands of the outside world and devotes himself entirely to himself.

We observed the first instance of this, when he was returning home after his illness in Rome.<sup>167</sup> He felt then that, in telling all his Utopian plans and hopes, he had exposed himself too much to the mockery of his fellows; he was afraid that their hostility was endangering his inmost soul, and resolved to restrain himself in future. At the moment of crisis he rejected the call of his conscience and turned his thoughts inwards for very life.

This situation appears in 'Einsame Menschen', where Johannes Vockerat is torn between his deep compassion for the wretched life of the workers and his desire to devote all his energies to his work, to his own egoistic ambition; Vockerat tries to reject the demands of his

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<sup>166</sup> See above pp. 94-95; <sup>167</sup> see above pp. 26-27.



conscience, but he cannot rid himself of a sense of guilt, because the work of which he is so proud, has no bearing on the social problem. This feeling of guilt is at the root of the weakness which causes his final downfall; encouraged by Anna Mahr, he succeeds for a time in banishing the conflict from his mind, but as soon as Anna is compelled to leave, he finds he has not the strength to go on alone; his egoism is not sufficient to carry him through.

The conflict between individualism and social conscience was reawakened in Hauptmann after the failure of his 'Florian Geyer'; he felt that the world had rejected him despite all he had wanted to do and had tried to do to help suffering humanity. In his bitterness he turned for a time to a Nietzschean egoism which he expressed in 'Der Mutter Fluch' and 'Helios', and later, although in modified form, in 'Die versunkene Glocke',

In the poem, 'Das Hirtenlied', written in the years 1888 and 1889, there is a similar reaction against the ugly and distasteful themes to which he feels he must confine himself because of his social conscience. The hero of the poem, an artist, expresses his disgust thus:

'Durch abgeleg'ne Gassen muss ich schleichen,  
in Keller kriechen, die nach Fusel duften,  
muss Speise schlingen, die mich ekelt, muss

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Gestank, verdorb'ne Dünste in mich atmen.  
 Dort, wo die Pest des Lasters ewig frisst,  
 Verworfenheit Gott schändet, wo der Mensch,  
 ein viehisch Zerrbild, sich im Schlamme wälzt,  
 ist meine Wohnung; dorthin führt mein Weg.<sup>168</sup>

He longs to be free of this environment, and his longing is embodied in the person of the angel who offers to lead the artist home. The artist objects that he cannot leave his suffering brethren, but the angel overrides the voice of conscience:

'Die Du zurücklässt in der Stadt der Schmerzen,  
 sie fragen nicht nach Dir und Deinem Werk.'<sup>169</sup>

These lines contain the essence of the conflict within Hauptmann; he longs to turn away from the unpleasantness of life, to cultivate himself within his own imagination; but to do so, he must abandon his fellows to their sufferings, and he looks back upon them with pity and regret. Yet abandon them he does, and escapes into the world of the Bible, becoming Jacob serving his seven years for Rachel, the symbol of his longings.

The hostility aroused by the 'Festspiel in deutschen Reimen' in 1913, affected Hauptmann in the same way as had the failure of his 'Florian Geyer'. Partly because of his wounded self-esteem, partly also in despair at the outbreak of the first world war, he again turned his back

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<sup>168</sup> 'Gesammelte Werke' (1910 edition), Vol. 6, p. 315.

<sup>169</sup> *ibid.* p. 317.

upon the grim external world and slipped into the dream world of 'Indipohdi'. Voigt and Reichart write on this subject: 'Jetzt greift er in dieser von Kriegs- und Mordlust erfüllten Welt zu dem märchenhaften Stoffe Shakespeares und flieht in ein Reich des Geists und der Phantasie, wo Dichtung, Mythos und Philosophie als harmonischer Dreiklang im Kosmischen das Vergängliche des Lebens übertönen. Es ist wohl Weltflucht, aber nur im beschränkten Sinne, denn am Schluss erkennt Prospero doch die letzte Notwendigkeit der seelischen Befreiung durch Selbstüberwindung.'<sup>170</sup> This statement shows the tension that lay behind 'Indipohdi'. Whether or not we accept the contention that Hauptmann was escaping from the ephemeral to the eternal, the truth remains that he was escaping from the external world because it had become intolerably painful to him, and in spite of all the human suffering that he was leaving behind, he still had to turn away.

These examples provide sufficient evidence of the periodic emotional crises to which Hauptmann was subject, and in the course of which he was torn between his pity for human suffering and an irresistible urge to flee from the ugliness and cruelty of the world and devote himself to his own inner needs.

The clearest example of this conflict is found in

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<sup>170</sup> Voigt and Reichart: 'Hauptmann und Shakespeare', p. 41.



'Till Eulenspiegel'. This epic was written during the disturbed years in Germany immediately after the first war, and it provided Hauptmann with a refuge from the anxiety with which the contemporary scene filled him. It was not an escape in the sense that his work on 'Indipohdi' was; for in 'Till', he wrote about the troubles of the time, the very topic that caused his concern; yet it none the less brought him relief. 'He himself said of this work: 'Mein Till ist ein Werk, das nur aus der Nachkriegszeit entstehen konnte. Durch alle Poren drang die Zeit in diese Dichtung ein. Es war eine Art Notwehr gegen die Trübsal und die althafte Problematik der Gegenwart. Ich schlüpfte in Till hinein und fühlte mich immer glücklich, wenn ich Till war. Durch ihn und mit ihm genoss ich die Zeit - trotz allem - , wie er selbst ja genießt und sich in seiner Phantasie erlöst.'<sup>171</sup> There is an obvious inconsistency in this explanation; it is caused by the tension between Hauptmann's pity for the troubles of his fellow-countrymen and his need to escape from them; Till is at once the embodiment of Hauptmann's social conscience and of his intense individualism; in Till, Hauptmann wanted to plunge into the troubles of the day, to share them to the full and to try to find some remedy for them; but at the same time he had to protect himself against the

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<sup>171</sup>Behl, 'Zwiesprache mit Gerhart Hauptmann', p.136.

distressing sight of too much suffering. He had to try to find his own salvation as well as that of society.

This double purpose is reflected in the work itself. It could be divided into two parts, the first comprising the first fourteen adventures, which take place in Germany amid the contemporary strife, the second, the rest of the work, in which Till looks inwards and flees in his imagination to Ancient Greece, to find there the happiness that is impossible in the real external world.

Even the first part however is not uniformly devoted to experiencing the social unrest of the era of the Kapp Putsch; instead, there is a kind of ebb and flow in the poem, as at one moment Till is seen throwing himself into the turmoil, trying to calm the angry crowds and avoid bloodshed, while at the next he seeks a respite from the scenes of conflict. This ebb and flow is caused by the struggle between Till's conscience and his individualism.

His conscience derives from a sense of guilt, from which he cannot free himself since his experiences in the war; having been an air ace, he feels the blood of his victims on his hands. His mission is to protest against war, indeed against any violence: to show men the truth about themselves; this is the sense of

his mirror:

'Was mein Spiegel dem Klüger gezeigt, wenn er halbwegs  
für gut fand,  
es genau und nicht nur obenhin, dies Geschöpf, zu  
betrachten,  
ist der schreckliche Dämon, den, nach der  
Vernichtung der Menschheit,  
die im Kriege sich selbst verschlang, uns die Hölle  
zurückliess.  
Uebermensch nenn' ich ihn oder Raubmensch und besser  
noch: Unmensch.  
Unmensch aber, das ist schon kein Mensch, und in  
Wahrheit: er ist nicht,  
ist vergangen, verschollen, der Mensch, und auf ewig  
verschwunden.' 172

Following his mission Till shows the essentially false spirit behind chauvinistic war songs, a spirit that leads to the millions of war dead and after this catastrophe thinks only of vengeance; he protests against a militarism that esteems the machine-gun as the greatest invention of modern times and a Christianity that can give its blessing to a cannon.

As he wanders through Germany, Till sees everywhere blind hatred and cruelty. In Laubaum, he hears the very church bells preaching enmity towards each other.



Till's self-chosen task in this is to try to calm passions and to spread the spirit of tolerance; from the steeple in Laubaum he shouts his warning:

'Und so fürchte dein eigenes Schwert und dich selber,  
mein Deutschland!'<sup>173</sup>

He goes on to give his message: 'Vertrag euch!' He is answered by the noise of bullets.

As we have said, Till's experiences of the horrors of the period are punctuated by brief respites, during which he escapes or tries to escape. His meeting with Bach, his love affairs with the peasant girl and with Stella, his escapade at the court of King Abalus are of this nature. Till himself gives this explanation, when he is challenged by the gate-keeper at the king's castle:

"Guter Wächter am Tor, du vergisst, unten herrschet  
die Sintflut,"

spricht da Till, "und wir kommen, pitschnass, uns  
ein wenig zu trocknen."<sup>174</sup>

Yet it is seldom that he can really escape; even in the respites there is an undertone of horror, from which Till cannot free himself, partly of course because it is in himself. To Stella he says:

"Kain bin ich! Von Kains Geschlechte! das Glas  
meines Spiegels

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<sup>173</sup><sub>10/369</sub>; <sup>174</sup><sub>10/371</sub>.

zeigt mir täglich sein Bild. Stells, fliehe den  
 Mann, fliehe Kain,  
 du Gebärrerin, jenen Zerstörér von Anfang der Welt  
 an!" 175

Later he is called away from his love-making by the voice  
 of the owl,

'Dieser aber galt mir im besondren als mächtiger  
 Weckruf!' 176

It is the voice of his conscience that he is hearing,  
 calling him back to the world outside.

During his stay at the court of King Abalus Till  
 can scarcely be said to have found refuge from the flood.  
 Among celebrations and banquets, Till is dogged by morbid  
 ideas and dreams, evoked by the ruthless militarism of  
 some of the courtiers. The most striking is the dream  
 in which the sun is carried away by the horde of war-dead  
 who are now in the under-world, having beencheated out  
 of their life by the unworthy living.<sup>177</sup> The picture  
 of a sunless world full of cruelty and superstition,  
 that Till paints, is a reflection of contemporary Germany  
 and the pitiless hatred of the opposing factions. In  
 fact the horror has pursued Till into his asylum; he  
 flees again, this time trying to hide in the underworld  
 of society, among gypsies and vagabonds. But here too  
 he is followed by his nightmares of cruelty and death.

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<sup>175</sup><sub>10/328</sub>; <sup>176</sup><sub>10/340</sub>; <sup>177</sup><sub>10/400-426</sub>.

Now, however, Till is approaching a turning point; hitherto he has tried to escape only for short periods from the sufferings of life; now he hopes to break completely free. He announces this to Gule in the twelfth adventure:

'Und von heute und hier ab beginn' ich den Kultus  
der Schönheit

und verwerfe den Frondienst des Leides, ich,  
Till! ...' 178

He is unable to break away there and then however. It is only after the nightmare of the world council of religions that Till finally despairs of being able to do anything to save the world from itself. In his preamble to the fourteenth adventure, Hauptmann describes it as 'Tillens allerbitterstes, allerschwerstes, allerniederdrückendstes und auch gefährlichstes Erlebnis.'<sup>179</sup>

In this dream adventure, Till is made emperor and presides over a council of the representatives of all the religions of the world. The meeting breaks into the wildest confusion; the delegates quarrel violently and irreconcilably with each other. Finally Till bursts into tears of frustration and despair; he laments:

'.... Ich beweine mein Volk! Ich beweine  
den unendlich mühseligen, dornigen Aufstieg der

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<sup>178</sup>10/514.



Menschheit!

Ich beweine den ewigen Krieg, den kein Friede je  
abschliesst!

Ich beweine den Glauben, beweine so Wissen als  
Irrtum!

Gott am Kreuze beweine' ich, den Statthalter Christi  
und seinen

Gegenpapst, Martin Luther, sie alle beweine' ich,  
beweine' ich!

Ich beweine auch die, die am Volke verblutet,  
verblutet

an der Menschheit, verblutet im Krieg und verblutet  
am Glauben!

die am Wissen verblutet und die da verblutet am  
Irrtum,

die verblutet für Christum am Kreuze, verblutet  
für seinen

mächt'gen Hirten zu Rom und die, die verblutet für  
Luther!' 179

Till can no longer bear the thought of the unending  
suffering that he can do nothing to stop. The crisis is  
almost reached.

Immediately after the meeting, Emperor Till is  
called to the market place. Here a kind of Juggernaut,  
a god-tower has been erected; it represents the 'masses'.

'Masse! Masse! Ich bin's, der das rief! Ich,  
 die Masse, ich rief es!  
 niemand sonst, denn es ist niemand sonst, weil nur  
 ich bin, die Masse,  
 ich, das Rad aller Räder, die Masse! Der Einzelne  
 ist nicht,  
 ausser wenn er am Zahnrad der Masse ein eiserner  
 Zahn ist!' 180

It is this threat to the individual personality that finally turns Till away from his attempts to save humanity. The situation is parallel to Hauptmann's own after his illness in Rome, when he resolved to give up his Utopian preaching because he felt his own individuality threatened.<sup>181</sup> It was a similar fear of being swallowed up in the mass that prevented Hauptmann from joining the Social Democratic Party.<sup>182</sup> It is this threat to his personality that finally decides Till to turn inwards to his own imagination and escape to Greece.

Hauptmann himself sees this not as a flight from reality itself, but as the abandonment of the external phenomenal world for the ultimate reality of the realm of ideas. Voigt expresses this point of view in these words: 'Als Till dann seinen Geistesflug nach Hellas nimmt und den Boden seines Deutschland verlässt, fliegt er da nicht in ein Jenseits, das erst wahre Realität

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180<sub>10/580;</sub> 181<sub>see above pp. 26-27;</sub> 182<sub>see above</sub>  
 p. 36.

besitzt? Tills Weg geht von Deutschland nach Griechenland, geht vom Diesseits ins Jenseits, geht aus der schrecklichen Wirklichkeit ins luftige Reich der Phantasie - aber nur scheinbar, nur Kusserlich. In Wirklichkeit verlässt er das Reich der Larven und Gespenster und flieht in die strahlende Helligkeit südlichen Landes, verlässt er Dunkel und Schemenhaftigkeit, kurz, die Welt des Scheins, um einzutauchen in die Welt wahren Seins. Mit Platon wertet der Dichter unsere Begriffe um und stellt das Reich der Ideen als das einzig wesenhafte und wertvolle dar.<sup>183</sup> Hauptmann himself would undoubtedly accept this view of his work, and in fact, Baubo, with whom Till spent his thousand blissful years in his dream world has a certain earthy reality that is lacking in the characters of the phenomenal world. Yet the argument is scarcely convincing; for it is difficult to believe that the journey into the world of ideas would take place at all, were it not that the phenomenal world had become so unpleasant as to be unbearable. In the final analysis, Till flees from one dream world to another, from the nightmare of the Wittenberg council to the dream of bliss; yet the nightmare is a reflection, albeit a distorted one, of external reality; the sojourn in Greece on the other hand is purely fantastic. The

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<sup>183</sup>Voigt, 'Antike und antikes Lebensgefühl', p. 109.



movement then is still from the real to the imaginary. Hauptmann values Plato's theory of ideass because it provides a justification for abandoning the outside world with its suffering. His acceptance of the theory is a piece of self-deception forced upon him by his conscience. He cannot otherwise allow himself to turn his back upon his fellows.

Till's idyllic life with Baubo, with its untroubled peace and security, with its plentiful food and drink obtained from a beneficent nature, in the remote valley undisturbed by god or man, is characteristically a wishful dream of escape from the trouble and uncertainty of the post-war world. The ride on Cheiron's back, however, when Till perceives the very origins of the life process, is more in keeping with the theory of ideass.

The ultimate effect of the Greek experience upon Till is revealing. This is how he thinks of himself after his dream:

'Namenlos, ohne Freund, ohne Feind, ohne Vater und  
Mutter,

ohne Haus, ohne Land, ohne Volk, ohne Pflicht, ohne  
Bindung,

ohne Schuld und Verdienst. Nicht von Lappen und  
Flicken umklunkert,

? schnörkelles schreitich hin mit dem einzig'n Besitz  
meiner Nacktheit.

Unbelastet wie nie ist mein Schritt, kaum berührt  
er das Erdreich.

Götter? sind sie mit mir? Ich bedarf ihrer nicht,  
meinethalben:

selber bin ich ein Gott, der sich eben sich selber  
enthüllt hat.<sup>184</sup>

Till's experience in Hellas has left him completely  
untrammelled by the bonds of existence. He is complete  
in himself, god-like in his independence, the individualist  
par excellence. Later he says of himself:

'.... Jetzt erst bin ich! Ich bin und ich kenne  
mich selbst nicht.

ich besitze nicht Haut und nicht Knochen, und was  
sonst für Teile

sich im Spiegel gespiegelt. Ich bin nur die Kraft  
eines Daseins,

ganz harmonisch, ganz einig mit sich und sich selber  
geniessend.<sup>185</sup>

Till has achieved the complete freedom of the indivi-  
dualist. He has even rid himself of the mental conflict  
to which his conscience subjected him. But it is im-  
possible to go on living in this way; life itself  
involves us in duties and obligations. Till therefore  
has no choice but to die.

Conscience however is not easily lulled to sleep,

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<sup>184</sup><sub>10/665</sub>; <sup>185</sup><sub>10/666</sub>.

and may manifest itself in strange ways. Just before his death, Till meets Christ, who says to him:

'Wunden weis' ich dir nicht oder Narben an Händen  
und Füßen,

kein zermartertes, blutendes Haupt, das von Dornen  
zerrissen

eitrig starrt, noch den schwarzen, van den Striemen  
geborstenen Rücken.

Alles dieses ist lange verheilt und verharscht und  
vergessen.'<sup>186</sup>

In this way, Till's sufferings are related to Christ's; now Christ has recovered from the wounds dealt him by the world; like Till he is no longer suffering for the world. This provides a kind of spurious justification of the urge to flee from life, of the rejection of duty towards society. For if even Christ is no longer suffering for humanity, then it must surely be right for Hauptmann, disguised as Till, to desert the world and think of his own salvation.

'Till Eulenspiegel' then, reflects a conflict in Hauptmann between his natural pity and his equally natural longing to escape from the turmoil and insecurity of civil strife. It is an example of the conflict between Hauptmann's individualism and his conscience, which appears periodically during his life, particularly

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<sup>186</sup> 10/674.



at a crisis in his own or his country's affairs. In 'Till' the conflict is more in the foreground than in any other work. The central theme may be seen perhaps in the image in the saturnalia of the eleventh adventure, when the priest, as he holds high the wine of the Eucharist, is enfolded and entwined by a vine, symbolising a synthesis of Christian and Dionysian mysteries.<sup>187</sup> It is a symbol of the longed-for reconciliation of the conflicting impulses in Hauptmann: the urge to devote himself to himself, and the compassion for others that deters him from so doing.

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<sup>187</sup> 10/503-504.

Chapter VIHauptmann's Messianic Vision.

The beginnings of Hauptmann's messianic vision may be seen in the affinity that he felt he had with Prometheus, the emotion which inspired his 'Promethidenlos'. As we have seen, he felt justified in this feeling because of his experiences in Rome.<sup>188</sup> A fervent advocate of social reform, he had, as he thought, been persecuted because of his advanced views by the German community in Rome. At the same time he had also been revelling in dreams of grandeur, seeing himself now as a great sculptor, now as a poet, but in either case as of almost godlike stature. As these different views of himself came together, he appeared in his own eyes as a divine figure suffering for his love of human kind, a new Prometheus.

Surprising though it may at first appear, it was, after all, quite a natural step from the pagan demigod Prometheus to Christ.<sup>189</sup> During the Erkner period, Hauptmann began the 'Jesusstudien', a venture into Higher Criticism. His aim was to re-create the character of Christ through a critical study of the gospels. The picture of Christ at which he arrives, though anything but new, is revealing. He sees Christ firstly as a man, not as the son of God. He is divine only in so far as he possesses a spark of divine inspiration, the Holy

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<sup>188</sup> See above pp. 45-46; <sup>189</sup> see below p. 122.

Spirit. His essential greatness lies in his absolute selflessness; because of this he had never been understood either during his lifetime or since, for even his disciples followed him from selfish motives. Stirk outlines Hauptmann's point of view in these terms:

'Als "Beweis für das totale Missverstehen" von Seiten der Jünger führt Hauptmann an, dass sie Jesum in den schweren Stunden bei der Gefangennahme und dem Kreuzestod verlassen. In dem Augenblick also, in dem in Jesu die Selbstlosigkeit triumphierte, triumphierte in seinen Jüngern die Selbstsucht. Derselbe Abstand, führt Hauptmann fort, der zwischen dieser Flucht und der Selbstopferung Jesu ist, besteht noch heut zwischen dem Christentum und dem, was Jesus wirklich gelehrt hat. Es ist der Unterschied zwischen Selbstsucht und Selbstlosigkeit. Kein einziger seiner Jünger tritt in Jesu Fusstapfen und als einziger Bekenner seiner Lehre stirbt Jesus.'<sup>190</sup>

Hauptmann sees Christ then as a great and noble figure, surrounded by enemies, understood by none, persecuted for his selfless love of mankind, alone in a hostile world. But if we examine this more closely, we find that it is how Hauptmann often liked to think of himself; it is very similar to the figure of Selin in the 'Promethidenlos'. His critical reading of the

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<sup>190</sup> S.D.Stirk, 'Gerhart Hauptmanns Jesusstudien', p.23.



gospels simply led Hauptmann to an idealised picture of himself, and this picture he identified with Christ, who thus became a symbol of Hauptmann's own inmost aspirations.

The short psychological study, 'der Apostel' (1890), reflects this kind of aspiration. It is in part a study in pathology, for the hero is insane, but in it Hauptmann does show how the messianic vision originates. Rilke too wrote a sketch of the same title (1896), and although it is exceptional in his work - he hardly ever wrote in this tone again - it is illuminating to compare it with Hauptmann's.<sup>191</sup>

Rilke's apostle preaches a Nietzschean egoism and bitterly denounces Christ's teaching of brotherly love as mere weakness. Hauptmann's apostle on the other hand is intended to be seen as a Christ-like figure, imbued with this very quality of love. The subjects of the two character sketches are therefore antithetical.

Yet when we come to compare them, we are faced with the paradox that Rilke's apostle, despite the Nietzschean egoism, is much less self-absorbed than Hauptmann's. For Rilke's hero is deeply conscious of the suffering in the world; it is something real which fills him with horror; he longs to see it ended. But he does not believe that it can be ended by brotherly love; on the contrary, brotherly love stands in the way of

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<sup>191</sup> Rilke: 'Erzählungen und Skizzen aus der Frühzeit.'  
p. 347.

human progress: it bids the strong stop and help the weak; but the weak are beyond help; if the strong man carries his weaker brother he becomes weak himself and his brother is no better. The effect of the Christian ethic, then, is to expose us to the scourges of fate with no weapon with which to defend ourselves. Far from improving the lot of mankind, it prevents human progress and serves only to perpetuate the sufferings of the world. The golden age of the superman can be attained in the course of the centuries, but only by the ruthless determination of the strong. The ultimate happiness must be built upon the misery of the present. Rilke's apostle inveighs bitterly against Christian love, but he does so from the loftiest and most generous motives. He is obsessed with a vision of a golden age of the distant future and works relentlessly towards it. But he himself has no part in the vision.

Hauptmann's apostle too is aware of the troubles of mankind, but for him these troubles are little more than the back-cloth against which he acts out his messianic role. He too sees visions, but his visions are all of himself. Early in the tale, Hauptmann sets him before a mirror to admire himself: 'Mit Wohlgefallen spiegelte er sich.'<sup>192</sup> A moment later we read: 'Ihm war wohl und zufrieden. Nur dass er sich selbst nicht

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<sup>192</sup><sub>1/456.</sub>

sehen konnte, bedauerte er.<sup>193</sup> He then looks around in the hope of finding someone who may see him. The inner weakness that lies behind this need for admiration contrasts strikingly with the firmness and assurance of Rilke's hero. The same weakness also takes the form of persecution mania. It is described in these words:

'Oft sah er mitten hinein in ein breites, freches Lachen. Oft bemerkte er, wie Staunen den Spott bannte. Aber hinter seinem Rücken befreite sich dann der Spott, und dreiste Reden, spitz und beissend, flogen ihm nach. / Mit jedem Schritt unter so viel Stichen und Schlägen wurde ihm alltäglicher zu Sinn. Ein Krampf sass ihm in der Kehle. Dar alte bittere, hoffnungslose Gram trat hervor. Wie eine Mauer, dick, unübersteiglich, richtete sie sich auf vor ihm, die grausame Blindheit der Menschen. / Nun schien es ihm auf einmal, als ob alles Leugnen unnütz sei. Er war doch wohl nur eine eitle, kleine, flache Natur. Ihm geschah doch wohl nur recht, wenn man ihn verhöhnte und verspottete. So empfand er minutenlang die Pein und Scham eines entlarvten Hochstaplers und den Wunsch, von aller Welt fortzulaufen, sich zu verkriechen, zu verstecken oder auf irgendeine Weise seinem Leben überhaupt ein Ende zu machen.'<sup>194</sup>

From this inner weakness, this sense of his own worthlessness arises a thirst for glory; fundamentally it is

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<sup>193</sup>1/458; <sup>194</sup>1/464-465.



of little consequence whether he is admired marching into town at the head of his troops, as he had been in his military service, or dressed up as an apostle and followed by wondering crowds. It is this thirst for glory that gives birth to his messianic dreams: 'Die Zeit war gekommen. Etwas musste geschehen. In ihm war eine Kraft, die Menschheit aufzurütteln. Jawohl! und sie mochten lachen, spotten und ihn verhöhnen, er würde sie dennoch erlösen, alle, alle!'<sup>195</sup> Out of this need to justify himself in his own eyes and in the eyes of men, grows the final delusion, the mystic union with Christ. His mission - apparently to bring world peace through vegetarianism - is merely part of the trappings of the drama in which he plays the leading rôle; a messiah must have a mission of redemption and a mankind to be saved; his vision is essentially one of himself in glory. This is in contrast with Rilke's hero, who has no personal part in his vision of the golden age.

The essential difference between the two characters lies then in this self-consciousness of Hauptmann's hero, which is entirely lacking in Rilke's. Both apostles are made to appear godlike; Rilke's however is seen in this light by other people, the guests in the hotel, while Hauptmann's appears so only in his own eyes.

If we look upon the messianic delusion as having

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<sup>195</sup><sub>1/467-468.</sub>

two sides to it, an inward-looking, individualistic side, deriving satisfaction from the greatness and glory of being a saviour, and an outward-looking, philanthropic side, which seeks by one means or another to achieve some form of perfection for mankind, then Hauptmann's apostle tends towards the individualistic, Rilke's towards the philanthropic.

We must bear in mind however, that Hauptmann's 'Apostel' is not typical of his work at that time; it was written during the period when Hauptmann was chiefly concerned with the social problem; the typical works of this time are 'Vor Sonnenaufgang' and the other social dramas that followed. The philanthropic side of Hauptmann's nature expressed itself in these works. But below the surface ran a strong current of individualism which revealed itself for a moment in the kind of religiosity that pervades the 'Apostel'. Voigt explains Hauptmann's state of mind thus: 'Der früh bei Hauptmann auftretende Skeptizismus gegenüber der Frömmigkeit der Brüdergemeinde und dem kirchen- und glaubensfesten Luthertum findet neue Nahrung in der allgemein gärenden Empörerstimmung der jungen Generation der achtziger Jahre. Die Berührung mit der modernen Naturwissenschaft in Jena und Zürich, die aufstrebende soziale Bewegung, all das bestärkt ihn in dieser ablehnenden Haltung. Aber man täusche sich nicht: nur an der Oberfläche tritt an die

Stelle der Religiosität eine areligiöse Ethik, eine verschwommene Mitleidmoral (im Promethidenlos), dann in den ersten Dramen eine kämpferische Sozialethik. In Wirklichkeit - und das ist das Bedeutende und Zukunftweisende dieser Frühzeit - fließt unter dieser breiten Oberfläche in der Tiefe still und verborgen ein Strom reinsten, ja weltflüchtiger Religiosität, der seine letzten Quellen in dem geheimnisvollen Urgrund der Landschaft und des erdverhafteten Menschenschlages hat. Schon im "Apostel" (1890) bricht diese Vereinigung von Natur- und Christumystik hervor: ein wahrhaft franziskanisches Naturgefühl beseelt diesen - gewiss mit manchen Schwächen behafteten - Schwarmgeist, der ein Verbundensein mit allem Werdenden in jedem Augenblicke neu erlebt, dem sich seine unio mystica cum Christo in der reinen Natur unter makellosem Himmel vollzieht.<sup>196</sup>

As we have already seen, there is a strong element of concealed individualism in this religiosity; Hauptmann's glorification of Christ is basically self-glorification. Since the philanthropic urge in Hauptmann was already finding an outlet in the social dramas, his egocentric desires ran the more strongly in the undercurrent of religiosity of which Voigt writes. It is not surprising therefore, that the individualistic should far outweigh the philanthropic in his 'Apostel'.

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<sup>196</sup> Voigt: 'Der Religiöse Weg Gerhart Hauptmanns', Neue Rundschau, Nov. 1937, Heft II, Jahrgang XLVIII pp.475-476.



Yet we cannot agree with Voigt when he draws a sharp distinction between the compassion of the 'Promethidenlos' and the social ethic of the early dramas on the one hand, and Hauptmann's religion on the other. All three attitudes are facets of the same inner conviction.

We have divided the messianic delusion into two distinct parts, the philanthropic urge, and the individualistic. It will simplify the argument if we follow up this distinction, and continue the discussion under these headings: a) the messianic task, and b) the individualistic aspirations of the Messiah.

Hauptmann himself associated the messianic task with the social problem in the fragmentary 'Jesus-Drama'; into this play he brought a scene in which a political meeting is taking place; social democratic and communist agitators harangue the crowd; into this meeting comes Heiber, the Christ-like hero, who seizes the opportunity to attack the orators and preach Christ's commandment of love. Here Hauptmann is clearly relating the teaching of Christ to contemporary social questions; this intention is suggested also in the title that he had once proposed for the play, 'Jesus von Nazareth, Soziales Drama'.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>197</sup>Stirk, 'Gerhart Hauptmanns Jesusstudien', p. 32.

In the novel, 'Emanuel Quint', the final outcome of Hauptmann's work on the 'Jesusstudien' and the 'Jesus-Drama', this social element has almost disappeared. Quint in his teaching does not deal with social and political questions as such. Yet if we consider 'Quint' within the context of Hauptmann's other work, we find that the hero's mission of redemption is connected with social questions.

We have already said that Hauptmann came quite early to the conclusion that the problems of society could be solved only when the barriers of class hatred had been swept away;<sup>198</sup> with his 'Florian Geyer', the hero of which he saw as a Christ-like figure, he had hoped to contribute towards this end. His criticism of orthodox Christianity was that it did not try to do the same. The mission of Quint is to awaken in men the spiritual life that will sweep away the inhuman divisions in society. Of Quint, Voigt says: 'er erhält durch sein Opfer den Geist in der Welt lebendig.'<sup>199</sup> The question at once arises: what kind of spirit? Stirk provides us with an answer: 'Für ihn (Hauptmann) ist Religion allein etwas Geistiges; er verlangt aber dabei, dass der Geist Gottes und der Geist Jesu, wie er ihn auffasst, auch auf die praktische Seite des Lebens sich bis in die kleinsten Handlungen auswirkt. So betont er immer die

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<sup>198</sup>See above pp. 95-97. <sup>199</sup>Voigt, 'Hauptmann der Schlesier' p. 87.

Selbstlosigkeit als die hervorragendste und göttlichste Eigenschaft Jesu und als den bei weitem wichtigsten Bestandteil von Jesu Lehre. Man könnte vielleicht behaupten, dass Hauptmanns Religion hier im besten Sinne des Wortes diesseitig ist, indem er die Verwirklichung des Reiches Gottes auf Erden erhofft durch die geistige Wiedergeburt der Menschen und die damit verbundene Ueberwindung ihrer Selbstsucht.<sup>200</sup> The spirit, then, is the spirit of selflessness which for Hauptmann was the most admirable of Christ's qualities, and which he saw as the prerequisite of the social progress for which he was striving. In this way and to this extent, Hauptmann's messianic visions as they appear in 'Emanuel Quint', are related to the social question.

If we are to trace the evolution of the messianic task as it is seen in Hauptmann's work, we must start, then, with the social problem. At the beginning, in the 'Apostel', it is implicit rather than explicit that the hero accepts it as his duty to mitigate the sufferings of his fellows; the mission of the hero is little more than a pale reflection of the author's own feelings about society; he is given no precise task; Hauptmann's awareness of his own social conscience and his attempt to bring about some social reform through his plays cause him to take the messianic task for granted. Florian

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<sup>200</sup> Stirk, 'Gerhart Hauptmanns Jesusstudien' pp. 57-58.



Geyer, however, who is for Hauptmann a kind of Messiah, has the mission of redressing the wrongs of the peasants; in him we find an approximation to Hauptmann's own social conscience: 'Ein brennendes Recht fließt durch sein Herz', as Rektor Besenmeyer puts it.<sup>201</sup> Meister Heinrich too, in the 'Versunkene Glocke', has a self-appointed task that is akin to Hauptmann's desire to spread the feeling of brotherly compassion throughout all strata of society<sup>202</sup>; this, the function of the magic bell, is related to Quint's teaching of selflessness. In all of these cases, the philanthropic side of the messianic vision is a projection of Hauptmann's own social conscience.

In 'der weisse Heiland' (1920), the mission of the hero is not related to social conscience. Montezuma is trying to lead his people away from their barbaric human sacrifices to a higher level of religion. For this reason he is ready to believe in the smooth-tongued Christian preaching of the Spaniards: but when he realises the true character of the invaders, he sacrifices himself to save his people from their materialism and cold-blooded brutality.

The magician Prospero in Indipohdi (1920) has a mission which resembles that of Montezuma. From his hermit's cave he rules the primitive Red Indian

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<sup>201</sup>2/332; <sup>202</sup>see above p. 97.

inhabitants of his island. Reluctantly he accepts the burden of being their king. His mission, however, goes beyond the province of kingship; like Montezuma, he has set out to lead his people to a higher level of existence. He has persuaded his subjects to abandon the practice of human sacrifice. When they are confronted with the misfortunes brought about by Ormann's rebellion, they threaten to relapse into the old ways, and demand a sacrifice to appease the wrath of the gods. By sacrificing himself instead of his son, whom he leaves as the heir to his throne and to his responsibilities, Prospero points the way both to his primitive subjects and to his son. He shows them that real virtue lies in self-sacrifice; it is an extension of Quint's teaching of selflessness.

In 'Indipohdi', Hauptmann's ideas are clearly influenced by those of Buddhism. He visualises a ladder of existence; on the highest level is Prospero himself, on the lowest, the Red Indians of his island, between them Ormann, the high priest Oro, Tehura and Pyrrha; Prospero's mission is to lead the others up the ladder as he ascends it himself. The 'Messiah' has become a kind of superhuman educator.

This conception of the messianic mission is transferred to other characters of non-prophetic status, as well as to Florian Geyer; for example to Hauptmann's

'Hamlet' (1929). He sees Hamlet as a rebel against the established order; it is Hamlet and not Laertes who leads the revolt in Act IV, according to the Hauptmann version, and it is a revolt with the aim of bringing about a new order. Into this act too, Hauptmann introduces a short scene between Hamlet and Fortinbras, showing them to be allies sharing the same ideals. Fortinbras says to Hamlet:

'Ich grüss in Euch den Mann, erlauchter Prinz,  
Nach Alter und Gesinnung ganz Euch nah,  
bitt' ich Euch, Prinz, durchaus auf mich zu zählen.'<sup>203</sup>

After the catastrophe, Fortinbras appears as the new heir to the throne. In this way Hauptmann ensures the triumph of the ideals of Hamlet, who prepares the way for them by his death. Hamlet himself says just before receiving the challenge to fence with Laertes: 'Ich sterbe für die Welt',<sup>204</sup> which seems to suggest that he foresees what is about to happen and willingly sacrifices his own life for the cause. Voigt and Reichart summarise it in this way: 'In Hauptmanns Deutung und Neubearbeitung ist der "Hamlet" zu einem Drama der Weltenwende geworden, der Hamlet im Unterliegen siegend und seine metaphysische Mission erfüllend den Weg bahnt.'<sup>205</sup>

The ideals towards which Hamlet was striving appear more clearly in the original Hauptmann play, 'Hamlet in

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<sup>203</sup>11/404; <sup>204</sup>11/440; <sup>205</sup>Voigt and Reichart, 'Hauptmann und Shakespeare', pp. 76-77.



Wittenberg' (1935). His mission is symbolised in the Cophetua masquerade, which is made to resemble Christ's entry into Jerusalem. Fachus hails this masquerade as,

'ein Vorschmack jenes tausend jährigen Reichs  
König Kophetuas, alias Jesu Christi,  
das nach dem offenbarten Gotteswort  
der Heiland noch auf Erden will errichten.'<sup>206</sup>

During this procession, we are told, patrician shakes hands with beggar, while rich and poor embrace amid tears of joy. In the person of the gypsy girl Hamida, poverty is glorified;

'Es war, als sei die Armut selbst vom Himmel  
herabgestiegen und die Menschen hätten  
begriffen, dass sie ihre Mutter sei  
und ihrer aller einziger Besitz.  
Und darum sah man sie nun hoch zu Ross  
als Königin, als wahre Kaiserin,  
als höchsten Erdenreichtum: nämlich Armut! -  
Als Göttin!'<sup>207</sup>

The effect of Hamlet's masquerade described here is similar to the effect Meister Heinrich hopes to achieve with his bell in 'die versunkene Glocke'; it is the awakening of 'Eros', as Hauptmann visualised it.<sup>208</sup> At the end of the play, Hamlet himself describes his aims:

'Ich wollte andres, als mir Ahnung kündet.

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<sup>206</sup> 13/264;    <sup>207</sup> 13/264-265;    <sup>208</sup> see above pp. 99-101.

Nicht Fäulnis schneiden aus des Staates Körper,  
 aufräumen nicht den Wust von Schuld und Blut,  
 vielmehr errichten einen neuen Bau:  
 mag sein, wie Romulus mit Schwert und Kelle,  
 doch mit dem Cherub Gottes an der Seite,  
 der seiner tiefsten Liebe Vollmacht trägt.' 209

It is clear that we are dealing here with Hauptmann's long cherished dream of achieving a new society by breaking down the barriers of prejudice and hatred through the influence of 'Eros'.

In his Hamlet novel, 'Im Wirbel der Berufung' (1936), Hauptmann further elaborates his conception of Hamlet's messianic rôle. Speaking through the schoolmaster Trautvetter, he associates the drama with the cult of the dead in post-Homeric Greece. Trautvetter explains that it was believed, that immediately after death, the soul of a hero had similar powers to the chthonic deities. Thus dead heroes, especially if they had been murdered, must be placated by sacrifice. He goes on to link this belief with 'Hamlet': 'In diesem Shakespearischen 'Hamlet' steckt, unbewusst erstanden, seelenkultisch sozusagen erstanden, ein antik-heroisches Leichenspiel. Der furchtbare Geist des ermordeten Königs Hamlet, zum Heros geworden, fordert Sühne und Rache an seinem Feinde. Er ist in vollem Waffenschmuck und bereit, selbst sich

an einem säumigen Rächer, wenn es sein muss zu rächen. Was ihn einzig und allein versöhnt, ist Blut. / Von einem solchen mystischen Blickpunkt aus gesehen, wird der Heros, wenn unbefriedigt, zu einem grässlichen, furchtbaren, unversöhnlichen, racheglühenden Geist, der Gut und Böse, Schuld und Unschuld in wahlloser Raserei vernichtet. Und so gesehen, gewinnt das Blutbad, durch das die Ehebrecherin, Hamlets Mutter, der Ehebrecher und Thronräuber Claudius, sein Werkzeug, sein Helfer Polonius, dessen Tochter Ophelia und Sohn Laertes, schliesslich der säumige Prinz Hamlet vernichtet und gerichtet am Boden liegen, ein neues Aussehen. Der beleidigte Dämon zerstört und zertritt sein eigenes Haus. Und so wird er im Stück, in der Oekonomie dieses Leichenspiels, zur unterirdischen, schicksalbestimmenden Hauptsache.<sup>210</sup>

Whatever we may think of this view of the play, it does throw light on Hamlet's character as Hauptmann saw it. On this subject, Voigt and Reichart write: 'Hamlet ist nicht willig, dem Befehl des Geistes zu gehorsamen. Er ist der erste moderne Mensch, der sich für Blutrache durchaus nicht interessiert, aber in den Gewölben des alten Schlosses kann er sich dieser Macht nicht entziehen.'<sup>211</sup>

For Hauptmann then, Hamlet stands at a cross-road in history; he is the first modern man; his death is a sacrifice which prepares the way for a

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<sup>210</sup> 13/532;

<sup>211</sup> 'Hauptmann und Shakespeare' p. 99.



new era in human behaviour. Like Prospero, he is an educator, leading humanity to higher levels.

Although not an educator, Iphigenie, in the 'Atridentetralogie' (1940-1945), bears some resemblance to Hamlet, since by her death she helps to bring about a new era of happiness to her family and to Hellas. For after his purification in Delphi, Orestes can look forward to a new life as king of Sparta and Arcadia.

'Ein neues Leben fängt sich für Orest  
sowohl in Sparta als Arkadien an  
und mit der Götter Gunst verjüngtes Werden  
des Atreusstamms.'<sup>212</sup>

All this would be impossible, however, should Iphigenie return home, for the world would then regard the sacrifice in Aulis as a fraud. She herself explains what the consequences would be if she returned:

'Agamemnon  
war also ein Betrüger, würde man  
sogleich in Hellas allenthalben raunen,  
er hat die Tochter nie geopfert und  
das Volk der Griechen hinters Licht geführt.  
Wie der Erzlügner dann den Tod erlitt,  
war nur gerechte Strafe. So die Stimme  
des Volkes! und sie würde weiter laut  
und lauter werden: dieses Atreushaus -

hiesse es dann - sei durch und durch verfault  
und müsse schmählich ausgerottet werden  
mit allen seinen Wurzeln! <sup>213</sup>

The death of Iphigenie has thus become a political necessity; by choosing to die, she makes possible the opening of a new era in Greece, in which the horror and bloodshed that pervade the atmosphere of the tetralogy will be at an end.

This nightmare atmosphere reflects Hauptmann's reaction to the cruelty, suffering and death in the world around him - the work was written during the second World War. Professor Gregor appears to believe that the work is in fact a veiled attack upon Hitler and National Socialism. He writes: 'Ich finde..., dass es die alte Gewalt der "Weber" ist, die sich nur gegen einen neuen und unendlich blutig gewordenen Herrn Dreissiger wendet - und bei einem unendlich gereiften und erhöhten, mythologischen und zeitbedingten Anlasse! Und darum ergriff ich auch, als er mir die fertiggestellten Teile in einer scherischen Nachtstunde vorlas, seinen Arm und rief, nicht durchaus in Scherze: Das wagen Sie alter Mann?! - Worauf er, den Finger am Munde, gegen Türen und Fenster, sogar in die Tiefe, unter den Tisch: Pst! Pst!' <sup>214</sup> According to this interpretation, Hauptmann is presumably seeking a remedy for

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<sup>213</sup>15/408; <sup>214</sup>Gregor: 'Gerhart Hauptmanns Atridentetralogie und ihre Vorläufer' - Phaidros, II Jahrgang Folge I - 1948 pp. 72-73.

the ills of the contemporary world in the realm of mythology, and the sacrifice of Iphigenie must symbolise the need for atonement for the crimes that were being perpetrated in modern Europe. The messianic mission would then seem to be breaking out from the realm of pure imagination into the external world.

This tendency to see modern problems in mythological terms reappears in 'der neue Christophorus' (1943), as does the motif of the superhuman educator. Behl attributes this motif to 'pädagogische Sehnsucht' in Hauptmann. He writes: 'Als Erzieher und Hüter des neuen, geläuterten, besseren Menschen also sah sich Hauptmann, und um dieses sein letztes und höchstes Wunschbild kreist seine Dichtung.'<sup>215</sup> In the preface to 'der neue Christophorus', Hauptmann explains his purpose in writing the work: 'Ich nannte es dann 'Der neue Christophorus', nach der bekannten populären Gestalt, die das Jesuskind auf der Schulter über einen reissenden Fluss rettet, sozusagen mit Mühe und Not. / Es handelt sich in meinem Fall um das Kind der Kultur.... Wäre dem Werk Vollendung beschieden, so müsste am Schluss eine Verkörperung des deutschen Menschen dastehen und darüber, gegenwärtig und in die Zukunftweisend, der neue Mensch.'<sup>216</sup>

In 'der neue Christophorus', there are two distinct

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<sup>215</sup>Behl: 'Die Metamorphosen des alten Wann' - Gerhart Hauptmann Jahrbuch, 1948, p. 114.

<sup>216</sup>'Der neue Christophorus', p. 7.



messianic figures, Erdmann, 'das Kind der Kultur', or more accurately the child saviour of civilisation, and the 'Bergpater', whose task it is to carry the child saviour across the raging torrent of contemporary crises in human affairs. The published part of the work was written in four distinct periods, the first from 1910 to 1920, the second during 1933 and 1934, the third in 1937, and the fourth in 1940 and 1942.<sup>217</sup> The parts written in the first two periods describe Erdmann's supernatural birth from the grave, and his childhood; the rest of the book, Erdmann fades into the background, the thread of the novel becomes lost, and Hauptmann begins to use the work merely as a repository for his thoughts; he elaborates these in a series of discussions amongst the characters grouped round the figure of the Bergpater.

Erdmann is presented to us as a kind of 'Messiah' right from his birth. The Bergpater explains the child's character and mission in these words: "Hier bring ich dir den Neugeborenen," sagte der Pater, als die Magd vor die Tür trat, "den neuen Menschen, den Menschensohn, den Gottessohn, den Allerwarteten, den Allersehnten, dessen Erscheinung der Löwenruf verkündete. Es ist der freiwillig, nicht gewaltsam Wiedergeborene, der liebevolle Schmerzsucher, der Tröster, der Welterlöser, der die

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<sup>217</sup> After publication of the work as a fragment in 1943, Hauptmann took it up again and went on adding to it right up to his death. These additional two books are as yet unpublished.

offene Tür des Himmels vermied und heiter bewusst sich aufs neue der Erde anhaftete. Kurz, Gargi, nimm! Den neuen Sotapanno bringe ich dir."<sup>218</sup> There is here a strange mingling of Christian and Buddhist thought; the main idea, however, is familiar in Hauptmann; Erdmann is to give a supreme example of self-sacrifice; this has begun even in his birth, which is a voluntary renunciation of heaven. By this example, Erdmann is to inspire and mould the new man. In this respect, the theme is similar to that of 'Indipohdi'.

Erdmann's mission is touched upon in the description of his childhood. The boy looks upon life in the world as a kind of exile from heaven. His mission is related to this sense of exile and is expressed through apparently childish games in which he leads a band of village children on long excursions. When questioned afterwards about what he had intended, Erdmann replies at one time: 'Wir wollten die Stelle finden, wo man von der Erde in den Himmel steigen kann', at another, 'Wir wollten den Rand der Welt erreichen, um einen Blick in das, zu tun, was jenseits ist', and on a third occasion, 'Wir suchten das gelobte Land'.<sup>219</sup> He is evidently obeying an urge to lead the children home out of the exile of life in the world. Later Erdmann appears to seek a solution by simply accepting the situation and

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<sup>218</sup> 'Der neue Christophorus' pp. 33-34; <sup>219</sup> *ibid.* p. 72.

facing the loneliness of human life with stoic heroism. He meditates in this fashion: 'Ist es nicht, fragte er in sich hinein, einer unter den vielen Versuchen, Verlassenheit zu verschleiern, zu leugnen oder gar aufzuheben, der wir nun doch einmal unrettbar verfallen sind? Es heisst, weil sie sündigten gegen Gott, sind die ersten Menschen auf die Erde verstossen worden. Von dieser Behauptung wusste ich nichts und hatte doch das Verbanntengefühl, und das Gefühl hat mich nicht losgelassen. Es war da, ist da und wird immer da sein, auch wenn Pastor Pavel die Geschichte von Adam und Eva mir nie erzählt. / Alles, aber auch alles, was Menschen tun, stieg ihm auf, ist verzweifelter Kampf gegen diese Sachlage. / Sollte sich dies der Mensch, denkt der Knabe fort, nicht am besten eingestehen und sein Heldentum auf diesem Gebiet suchen?'<sup>220</sup> If this thought were followed up, Erdmann would presumably have the task of setting such a heroic example. The thought is not however followed to its logical conclusion. We may take it, then, that Erdmann's mission, as Hauptmann originally intended it, was to teach the 'new man' how to accept or overcome the cosmic loneliness which is his lot. Erdmann's view of the human situation is clearly the same as that underlying many of Hauptmann's earlier works which we have discussed in Chapter III.<sup>221</sup> It is

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<sup>220</sup>Ibid. p. 75;      <sup>221</sup>see above pp. 69-70.



yet another expression of Hauptmann's deep sense of insecurity.

In the conversations of the third period, we are given a glimpse of the somewhat nebulous ideas and aims that lay behind Hauptmann's interest in creating myths. The Bergpater declares it his chosen task to keep alive the forces that create myths. For he believes that modern man needs the protection of the myth that science has tried to destroy. 'Man frage, wie eine Fackel brennt, und sie gibt allein durch die Flamme Antwort. Da ich nun eine sprechende Flamme bin, sage ich es, weil ich den Menschen zunächst mit seinem unabänderlich mystischen Wesen in Einklang bringen will, um ihm die Notwendigkeit eines allgemeinen Mythos auf höherer Ebene aufgehen zu lassen. Ein solcher schwebte über dem Griechentum. Und so über Rom, dessen Macht durch ihn nicht gelitten hat. Ein solcher auch über dem Mittelalter.'<sup>222</sup>

The creation of a myth, however, is not an end in itself; the myth is to serve as a kind of protection for man. Hauptmann sees the individual human soul in danger of being submerged in the mass of the highly organised society of to-day. On this subject the Bergpater says: 'Man wendet sich heut, wie gesagt, gegen den Anspruch des Individuums. Der Mensch soll nichtmehr um seiner

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<sup>222</sup>Ibid. p. 118.

selbst willen geboren sein, seine ganze Tätigkeit, so verlangt man von ihm, ist ein Sich-Verleugnen, Sich-Aufgeben. Man verlangt eine Verwechselbarkeit tausender mit einem, eines mit tausenden. Wen erinnert das nicht an eine Fabrik, wo Millionen und Abermillionen absolut gleicher Rädchen für eine Maschine fabriziert werden? Doch der Mensch bleibt Mensch; er sieht, hört, atmet, und denkt irgendwie. Er umarmt seine Frau und zeugt Kinder, erzieht in ihnen den Willen zum Leben, den unzerstörbaren Willen zum Glück. Ein blosses Maschinenrad ist er nun einmal nicht. Er soll sein Leben in jedem beliebigen Augenblick für das Vaterland wegwerfen; aber da haben wir schon wieder lauernd den individuellen Gedanken des Heldentums. Held ohne Ehrgeiz ist nicht zu denken. Der Ehrgeiz spornt ihn; er will sich auszeichnen, über das Mittelmaass erheben. Und bei dieser Gelegenheit greift er auf seine eigensten, tiefsten und besten Kräfte zurück, und wird wieder er selbst im höchsten Masse.<sup>223</sup>

We are already familiar with this theme in Hauptmann, in which he is concerned with the threat to the individual soul from the forces of society. The conversation that follows immediately upon the above quotation shows that at the time it was meant to be the main theme of the novel. The conversation goes on: "Sie sind ja förmlich," sagte die Gräfin Labda, "ein neuer Christophorus!" /

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<sup>223</sup>Ibid. pp. 142-143.

"Nur fehlt uns das Kind," meinte lachend der Doktor,  
 "welche<sup>?</sup> das überaus mysteriöse Christuskindlein  
 ersetzen könnte." / "Wenn Gott will, wird es sich  
 finden," sagte, sich erhebend, der Pater.<sup>224</sup> At

this stage then, we may take it that the mission of the  
 Bergpater was to renew the myth of St. Christopher  
 carrying the child Jesus across the torrent, and to  
 use it in order somehow to strengthen the individual  
 soul in its struggle for survival in the modern state.

In the fourth period in which Hauptmann worked  
 on 'der neue Christophorus', the years 1940 and 1942,  
 he is strongly affected by the impact upon him of the  
 second World War. He still contends that myth and its  
 creation are the highest that is given to man.<sup>225</sup> He  
 is still concerned by the problems presented by tech-  
 nical advances, but now he fears the destructive powers  
 that have been released by scientific discoveries. He  
 speaks of the nuclear explosions that threaten our  
 planet with disaster.<sup>226</sup>

The problem is presented and interpreted in terms  
 of mythology. The technical progress made by man springs  
 ultimately from the gift of fire by Prometheus. Now  
 this power, which was originally given to man as a great  
 boon, is being misused by the Titans in their war against  
 the Olympian gods; by turning man's scientific

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<sup>224</sup>ibid. p. 143;

<sup>225</sup>ibid. p. 152;

<sup>226</sup>ibid. p. 174.



discoveries to destructive ends, they hope to break down the divine order established by Zeus, and to restore the chaos that they love.<sup>227</sup>

Hauptmann sums up the situation in these words, part of a conversation between the Bergpater and Pastor Pavel: "Aus dem freundlichen Feuer des menschlichen Herdes hat sich ein Weltbrand entwickelt, der, nach Menschendenken, nicht mehr zu löschen ist. Und doch muss dieser Brand gelöscht werden, wenn der Mensch nicht verschwinden oder zum Raubtier werden will, zum Drachen, der brüllend und feuerspeierend seinesgleichen verflucht und zerreisst." / "Und," sagte der Pastor, "an dieser Arbeit des Löschens, die den Segen vom Fluche des Feuers trennt, werter Pater, wollen Sie doch im Sinne der reinen Liebesabsicht des Prometheus mitwirken?" / "Ja, das wollen wir allerdings! Aber es ist schwer: es verlangt allen Glauben, alle Glaubenskraft, deren der Mensch fähig ist, wenn man an dem Gelingen nicht zweifeln soll."<sup>228</sup> Here, then, the mission is related to the problem of human survival in the atomic era.

In another passage, Hauptmann speaks of his mission in a way that reminds us of Nietzsche's hope of calling into being a superman. "Nein, ich gebe die Hoffnung nicht auf, dass wir noch einmal zu Göttern werden, da wir doch in den Jahrmillionen, die hinter uns liegen,

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<sup>227</sup>Ibid. pp. 170-171;    <sup>228</sup>loc. cit.

zu Menschen geworden sind.'<sup>229</sup> He sees himself as a kind of superhuman gardener. 'Ich möchte aus einem vorhandenen Baum durch Veredlung eine neue Art züchten, von köstlichem Wuchs und einer nie dagewesenen Frucht, dabei auch an Widerstandskraft ausdauernd und neuartig.'<sup>230</sup> The tree that he hopes to develop in this way is the human race. The new race which he is to produce, will have the ability to survive the atomic crisis.

Like Hamlet, the Bergpater is placed at a turning point in human affairs and has the task of showing the way that must now be followed. He expresses the idea in these words: 'Ich habe den Löwenruf gehört! Wir stehen vor einer neuen Welt- und Geburtsstunde. Ich erfuhr den Umstand im Symbol. Die guten Dämonen aller Völker und auch des unseren sammeln sich; freilich in noch viel grösseren Mengen die bösen!'<sup>231</sup> In the final paragraph of the fragment, Hauptmann tries to point the way. The Bergpater speaks: 'Ich stehe nicht an, es heir auszusprechen: ein neues Gesetzbuch zu schaffen ist notwendig. Wir werden von Zeus und dem uns vertrauteren "offenbarten Gotte" ermächtigt - meinethalben im Inneren des Zobtenberges oder des Kyffhäusers -, mit den wahrhaft lebendigen Geistern der Deutschen uns zusammenzufinden und das neue Gesetzbuch zu beraten.'<sup>232</sup> Once again Hauptmann sees it as his mission to lead the human race

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<sup>229</sup> Ibid. p. 161;    <sup>230</sup> Ibid. p. 165;    <sup>231</sup> Ibid. p. 172;  
<sup>232</sup> Ibid. p. 176.

to a higher level of ethics. Here the Bergpater is close to Prospero and to Hamlet.

Before turning to the other facet of the messianic vision we may sum up our discussion of the development of the task of the 'Messiah'. In the earlier works, the mission of the hero is connected, even if indirectly, with contemporary human problems; at this stage, the mission is associated with the social problem, and the hero is given the task of breaking down harmful social barriers. In the middle period, in works such as 'Indipohdi', 'Hamlet' and the earlier parts of 'der neue Christophorus', the mission is divorced from the immediate problems of the contemporary external world; the action takes place in a completely imaginary world, in which the hero is called to lead the human race to a higher civilisation; for this reason, he is placed at a turning point in history, and by his life and sacrifice points the way of progress. In the final period, the 'Messiah' is still set at a cross-road in human affairs, but now this point is in the present and his task is once more related to actual contemporary human problems, firstly, the threat to the individual from the mass of a highly organised society, and then, the dangers to the human race from their discovery of forces which they are not yet sufficiently civilised to control.

We must now turn to the more individualistic side



of what may fairly be called the messianic delusion, and discuss the development of the apotheosis motif in Hauptmann's work.

This motif first appears in works in which the messianic idea is not present at all, or is only barely hinted at below the surface. Hannele experiences a dream apotheosis without having anything of the 'Messiah' in her; similarly, as we have already seen, Hauptmann tries to suggest a kind of apotheosis in Arnold Kramer after his death,<sup>233</sup> and he too is far from being a 'Messiah'; Hauptmann sees Florian Geyer's crusade against injustice as a kind of messianic task, and at the moment of defeat, when he is at the mercy of his enemies, Hauptmann tries to make him somehow triumph over them, and at the same time, by the use of biblical allusions, to relate him to Christ<sup>234</sup>; again he is trying to contrive a kind of apotheosis. In each of these cases, we see a victim overwhelmed by enemies, yet at the moment of defeat rising above them in death.<sup>235</sup> This recurring motif is Hauptmann's reaction to his own sense of inner weakness; it is the swing over from persecution mania to delusion of grandeur.

The same situation appears too at the end of 'der weisse Heiland'; here again Hauptmann makes use of biblical allusion to suggest a relationship between

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<sup>233</sup>See above pp. 71-72;    <sup>234</sup>see above pp. 72-73;

<sup>235</sup>There are precedents for this motif in earlier German literature, for example Werther and Egmont and some of Schiller's tragic heroes.

Montezuma and Christ; the Spanish soldiers mock and strike him as the Roman soldiers mocked and struck Christ; shortly before his death, Montezuma experiences, in a dream, a kind of divine triumph in which he sails in majesty in the golden imperial barge. In this vision he sees himself thus:

'O wie schön ist dieser König,  
o wie gross ist dieser Kaiser,  
o wie herrlich, o wie göttlich,  
wie glücklich und doch wieder  
wie unendlich schmerzreich!' 236

Yet there is an important difference in the case of Montezuma; he is not simply cornered by his enemies; he could save himself by co-operating with the Spaniards, but instead he deliberately chooses to sacrifice himself for the sake of his people, and in this way justifies his claim to be a 'Messiah'. He voices this claim as he speaks in a feverish dream shortly before the end:

'Eilet, eilt euch, denn der wahre  
Sonnenheiland spricht zum Volke!  
Und er bringt ihm die Erlösung  
von den Uebeln, von dem Teufeln,  
von den Schrecken dieser Welt.' 237

The idea of a voluntary self-sacrifice preparing the way for apotheosis plays an important part in

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236<sub>8/576</sub>; 237<sub>8/575</sub>.

Hauptmann's thought. In 'Quint', had it succeeded, it would have been the final step in the imitation of Christ, which is essentially a long struggle to achieve deification. For Quint's devotion to Christ is basically self-love. He himself says to Bruder Nathanael: 'Weil ich verachtet bin, habe ich ganz besonders das Wort der Schrift ergriffen, wo der Heiland sagt, wer Glauben habe, werde dieselben Wunder tun als er und grössere. Um meine Feinde dadurch in Demut niederzubeugen, wollte ich Zeichen und Wunder tun. Seit ich denken kann, habe ich mich an diesen Gedanken geklammert. Jahrelang ging ich, in mich verschlossen, umher und träumte davon, ein wundergewaltiger König und Gott zu sein. Ich habe mich selber als Götzen verehrt und angebetet. Mein Sinn stand durchaus nicht darauf, die Lahmen gehend, die Blinden sehend, die Schmerzgequälten von Schmerzen freizumachen, vielmehr ich wollte nicht nur von mir, sondern von hoch und niedrig rings um mich her bestaunt und vergöttert sein.'<sup>238</sup> This quotation shows clearly how the longing for an apotheosis originates; the need to be superhumanly great arises from the feeling of being hopelessly weak and insignificant. It shows too that it was primarily self-love that made Quint set out in the footsteps of Christ. We have already seen that for Hauptmann, the essential quality of Christ was

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<sup>238</sup>6/41.



his selflessness. It is however patently inconsistent to try to imitate a selfless being for reasons of self-love. Quint himself is aware of this, and it arouses a conflict in him. It lies at the root of his struggle with himself in the mountains, when he is driven from extremes of self-glorification to those of self-abasement, from misanthropy to a melting love of all mankind.

In addition, there is also in Quint a conflict between his genuine pity for humankind, a pity that flows from his own sufferings, and his love of self. This conflict is worked out too during the temptations on the mountain.

Hauptmann seeks a solution to the first of these conflicts through the mystic union with Christ, which Quint, like his predecessor the 'apostle', experiences in a dream. After this, the problem implicit in the imitation of Christ should be solved; since Quint is now aware that Christ is within him, his thirst for glory should be satisfied; yet it is not enough; to be satisfied, he must experience Christ's own apotheosis. This is what drives Quint to Breslau to strive for the martyr's crown. He is willing to sacrifice himself freely for his fellows as Christ did on the cross. If his venture had succeeded, it would have satisfied both Quint's love of mankind and his longing for divine greatness; on the surface, it would have appeared to reconcile

this intensely individualistic aspiration with the selflessness of Christ - which was what Quint was aiming at; he would have died for mankind, and by his sacrifice would have attained his apotheosis. The difficulty is that this sacrifice is far from convincing. Quint is much too consciously determined at all costs to bring about his own martyrdom, and this determination exposes the fundamentally selfish motive behind the sacrifice. This is the antithesis of genuine selflessness, and we must agree with Wilhelm Sulser when he describes it as 'raffinierter Selbstgenuss'.<sup>239</sup> The fundamental difference between Quint and Christ is that Quint undergoes no Gethsemane. Instead, this is what he feels: 'Es war ein ungeheurer mysteriöser Triumph in ihm, als er sich ungeduldig, fast eilend Breslau annäherte. Es sprach in ihm: Ihr Lauen im Lande, wisst ihr nicht, dass der Heilige Geist mit Brausen kommt? Und als er in das Bereich der Gassen kam: Feinde, Feinde, wohin ich blicke! Ich bin als Opfer gewürdigt worden! Kurz, ihn erfüllte die Wollust über die Ohnmacht der Welt, angesichts des Schreis, den seine Seele tat, nach Peinigung, nach dem Martyrium.'<sup>240</sup> It is clear from this that Quint in reality is not sacrificing anything. But the quotation shows something else. The contemptuous defiance with which Quint challenges the host of his

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<sup>239</sup>Sulser, p. 25; <sup>240</sup>6/487.

enemies is very similar to the mood we observed in Selin,<sup>241</sup> in many of the Hauptmann heroes who commit suicide,<sup>242</sup> and in Hauptmann himself, where it is reflected in his obsession with the idea of suicide. The mood savours more of the arrogant defiance of Lucifer than of the selflessness of Christ; as Quint's feelings will only be intensified by the failure of his plan, we must again agree with Sulser's comment on his eventual death in the Alps: 'Sein Sterben ist eher das Zerrissenwerden des dunkeln Gottes Dionysos.'<sup>243</sup>

This, then, is the culmination of Hauptmann's efforts to re-create the image of Christ after his own image. The final attempt to achieve an apotheosis through self-sacrifice must be considered a failure; if the sacrifice is not genuine, it at once loses all claim to greatness.

Although the apotheosis of Quint may be a failure, Hauptmann had already conjured up a vision of the exalted state that would presumably follow such an experience. Wann, in 'Und Pippa tanzt' (1906), whom Hauptmann describes as 'eine mythische Persönlichkeit', lives in lonely grandeur in a hut on the crest of the Riesengebirge, high above the affairs of men; he enjoys a supernatural insight into the workings of the universe, and with it the power to intervene, though not always

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<sup>241</sup> See above pp. 63-64;      <sup>242</sup> see above pp. 77-78.

<sup>243</sup> Sulser p. 25.



decisively, in human destinies. Behl expresses Wann's significance for us in these terms: 'Als in den ersten Jahren nach der Jahrhundertwende der Mensch Gerhart Hauptmann sich mit dem gern von ihm zitierten "Rinascimento des vierten Jahrzehnts" aus seelischem Zwiespalt und körperlicher Gefährdung, im Sinne jenes "Gestorben! Auferstanden!" mit dem Heinrich von Aue das wiedergewonnene Leben grüsst, zu neuer stabiler Existenz wandelte, da geschah es, dass der Dichter zum ersten Male sein Selbstbildnis als Wunschbild erschaute: als eides, als Ideal.... Unter die vielen Figuren, denen er Leben geschenkt hatte, mischte sich, sie um Haupteslänge überragend, die ehrwürdige Idealgestalt des alten Weltweisen Wann, der von seiner Winterhütte auf dem tiefverschneiten Kamm des Riesengebirges mit magischem Wink in Menschenschicksale eingreift, von einem mystischen ahnunghaften Wissen um das Geheimnis der Schöpfung mit höheren Kräften begabt und dennoch diesem Geheimnis und seiner Tragik verhaftet.'<sup>244</sup> It is, then, a vision of grandeur. Hauptmann sees himself as a superman. Of the messianic task, there is here no trace. It is true that he has not lost interest in the human race, for he says to the director: 'Wofür hat man sein tausend Meter hohes mitteldeutsches Observatorium? Wofür hat man ein Fernglas mit der selbst verfertigten Linse darin? Soll man nicht

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<sup>244</sup> Behl, 'Die Metamorphosen des alten Wann', Gerhart Hauptmann Jahrbuch, 1948, p. 97-98.

manchmal auf die alte sublunarisches Welt runtergucken und den Kindern auf die Finger sehen?<sup>245</sup> From this position of lofty but good-humoured superiority he still deigns to take an interest in human affairs, but an interest so distant that he can no longer be seriously affected by them. He acknowledges a higher power and acts as intermediary between this power and man. He represents in short, a vision of calm, dispassionate power, of freedom from the trammels of existence; in this last respect, Wann approaches the final state of Till.

Wann is important to us because he is the first of a line of similar characters; he is followed by Prospero in 'Indipohdi'. Pater Johannes in 'die Tochter der Kathedrale', and the Bergpater in 'der neue Christophorus'. Of these he is most closely related perhaps to Pater Johannes. Whereas Wann lives on top of the Riesengebirge, Pater Johannes lives in the seclusion of a magic forest. Both have supernatural powers and serve in some way as intermediaries between the ordinary race of mortals and a higher Providence. In 'die Tochter der Kathedrale', Hauptmann elaborates on these supernatural powers. Pater Johannes is the only man in the play who is able to distinguish truth from illusion; he speaks of God as 'der Weber aller

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<sup>245</sup><sub>4/425</sub>.

Weber',<sup>246</sup> and claims to be a 'Tisserand', one with special gifts, who sees and works at the pattern being woven by Providence:

'wir Tisserands, wir wissen's allesamt,  
dass wir sein auserwähltes Spielzeug sind.  
Er hat mit diesem Wissen uns begnadet -  
und ganz besonders mich. Graf Trossebof  
ist auch ein Tisserand, wie jeder Spielmann,  
Singer und Sager, jeder Dornbauer,  
Bildschnitzer, Geigenmacher und so fort,  
der Mime, der Jongleur, der Schöpfer, den  
die Muse Gottes tragisch inspiriert  
oder auch komisch. Solch ein Gotteskind,  
teils Spielzeug, teils verspielt, hiess Prospero  
vorzeiten: er beherrschte Kaliban,  
wie Gott, und so die aufgeregte See,  
beherrschte Ariel, beherrschte Puck:  
denn auch der Kobold Puck ist unentbehrlich  
in Gottes Spielzeug.<sup>247</sup>

The quality that raises Wann and the characters descended from him above other men, is the divine power of the creative artist; he it is who sees, interprets and carries out the plan of God the creator. In this way, Hauptmann manages to claim some validity for his dreams of grandeur, since his status as a creative artist makes

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<sup>246</sup>15/269;    <sup>247</sup>15/269-270.



him a kind of demi-god. Here again Hauptmann joins company with many poets of the last two hundred years or so, from the youthful Goethe onward.

In the case of the Bergpater, the philanthropic side of his character is much more fully developed. In spite of his lofty abode in the Riesengebirge, he is not detached from human affairs as is Wann; on the contrary, as we have seen, he is passionately concerned about the problems of men, and is constantly striving to find the solution. His aim is always to save the human race. He is like Wann and Pater Johannes, however, in that he has the same superhuman power and insight that make him a demi-god.

But the status of demi-god is not enough. In 'Indipohdi', Prospero is already a demi-god, both in comparison with the primitive inhabitants of the island and with his son Ormann, a civilised European; yet a further apotheosis is required at the end of the play.

We have already spoken of the ladder of existence, up the rungs of which it is Prospero's mission to lead his son and the natives of the island.<sup>248</sup> This idea borrowed from Buddhism is also a useful device to suggest the heights to which the messianic hero is rising, for the ladder is there also to be climbed by Prospero, the final ascent being symbolised by his

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<sup>248</sup> See above p. 133.

ascent of the volcano. Here Hauptmann shows a certain affinity with Hölderlin; both Prospero and Empedokles go to their death in a volcano. The resemblance is more than superficial, for both heroes die a death of stonement. Tehura suggests this aspect of Prospero's death:

'O wundervoller Dulder du! Und auch  
zugleich glücklichster Vollbringer. Ja, du bist,  
beladen mit der Menschheit Sündenschuld,  
unschuldig; und ein König, ungebeugt,  
ich fühle das, gehst du den Weg der Sühnung.'<sup>249</sup>

Thus Prospero can be seen to be related to Quint and Montezuma; like them he gives his life as a sacrifice for his people. To this extent, there is an element of Christian sentiment in the conception of 'Indipohdi'.

The idea of the redemption of mankind is more clearly developed in this play than in earlier works; this gives point to Prospero's sacrifice and so makes his apotheosis the more convincing. By his voluntary death, Prospero deters his subjects from reverting to the practice of human sacrifice; he gives them an example of the true meaning of sacrifice, and saves them from relapsing into barbarism. In addition, he points a way for Ormann, his son, who now becomes ruler of the island according to his father's testament; the undertaking of this task following Prospero's example raises

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<sup>249</sup>8/655.

him in turn to a higher plane. Voigt and Reichart see this as a combination of the Christian asceticism of 'Quint' and the love of life of 'der Ketzer von Soana'. 'Dieses Drama entwickelt sich auf der Linie der Synthese echter christlicher Religion, wie sie Hauptmann schon im "Narr in Christo Emanuel Quint" verkündet, und der wahren Lebensbejahung des "Ketzers von Soana". Prospero überwindet das Materielle des Lebens, er befreit sich von den sinnlichen Bedrängnissen des Menschen, er steigt geläutert zur ewigen Ruhe empor, im All und Nichts verschwindend; aber zu gleicher Zeit bedeutet das mehr als Weltverneinung. Durch die grosse Tat des Weltopfers läutert er den Sohn, der jetzt erst den tieferen Sinn des Lebens begreift und daher das Erbe des Vaters kann verwalten lernen.'<sup>250</sup> It is perhaps here that Hauptmann comes nearest to his goal, the integration of his individualistic and philanthropic aspirations.

There is in Prospero's final ascent to the sublime, something of the individualism of Till. For Hauptmann, his work on 'Indipohdi' provided a refuge to which he could escape for a time from the grim inhumanities of the first World War. When Prospero climbs his mountain and turns his back on the world, it is a world full of cruelty and horror that he is leaving; as he turns to

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<sup>250</sup>Voigt and Reichart, 'Hauptmann und Shakespeare', p. 43.



take one last look, these are his reflections:

'Kampf', noch immer Kampf,  
als hätte ein Wutbiss diese Welt gezeugt  
und diese blutige Riesenmühle Schöpfung,  
die grausam mörderisch die Frucht zermalmt.  
Nein, nein, es ist nicht wahr! Nichts ist hier  
Täuschung;

denn Blut ist Blut, und Brot ist Brot, und Mord  
ist Mord! Sind alle diese Rachen,  
die Mitgeschöpfe gegeneinander gähnen,  
womit dies blinde Leben schrecklich prunkt,  
Täuschung? Zerstückt des Haies Kiefer nicht  
des Menschen Leib? Ist nicht des Tigers Hunger  
qualvoller Hass und Mordsucht, und zerreisst  
er nicht Lebendiges und schlingt sein Fleisch?  
War eine Kreatur in diese Welt  
hineingeboren ohne Waffe, und  
die Mutter, die in Furcht und Grau'n gebiert,  
gebiert sie Furcht und Grauen nicht im Kinde? -  
Das ist nicht Täuschung, nein, es ist so, und  
so wäre dies Täuschung, dass die Welt  
nur meines Zaubers Täuschung war: und dies  
ist Wahwitz!' 251

These reflections show that in the longing to achieve a  
final apotheosis there is an element of *taedium vitae*,

intensified in this case by the sight of a world at war. They also show how impossible it is for Hauptmann to escape effectively from the distressing experiences of the external world, for at the very moment when his hero is about to melt into the godhead, he is compelled to look back on the suffering around him, and to admit that it is real.

We have said that Prospero, in the course of his life, makes a gradual ascent of the ladder of existence; the same characteristic may be seen also in Iphigenie, who in the course of the 'Atridentetralogie' three times experiences an apotheosis, each time through voluntary self-sacrifice. In Aulis, at least in appearance, she dies a death of atonement, in order to placate Artemis and gain a fair wind for Troy. For Iphigenie herself, her sacrifice means being raised to a divine state. Because of this and of the promise of eternal wedded bliss with Achilles, Iphigenie, like Emanuel Quint, looks forward gladly to her death on the altar. She says of it:

'Du hörtest recht! Ich wusste nicht bisher,  
was Wahrheit ist! Allmächtig hat sie sich  
in mich herabgesenkt: O fleht zum Himmel,  
dass nicht ihr heiliges Gefäß zerbricht  
kläglich in Scherben! Solche Wahrheit fühlen  
heisst sterben oder aber auferstehen

aus Menschenenge jauchzend in die Gottheit.<sup>252</sup>

Her second apotheosis takes place in Tauris, where she suffers a symbolic death as part of her consecration to the priesthood.<sup>253</sup> The effect is to free her from the trammels of the corrupt human world:

'Ich wurde neugeboren  
in dir, durch dich und durch Kronions Macht -  
weitab von dem, was Phoibos überglänzt -  
in eine Nacht des kalten Hasses wider  
die fürchterlich verdöbte Menschenwelt.'<sup>254</sup>

Brought back to Delphi, she dreads to return to the world from which she has been freed:

'So, Göttin, Mutter, führe mich zurück  
in des Barbarenlandes fremde Wildnis -  
und kann es nicht sein, sonst, wohin du willst:  
nur fort von Menschen, Jahrmarkstreiben, Freuden,  
die widerlich wie Kindsbrei sind, nur fort  
in fernste Felsenklüfte, Wüstenein  
und unauffindbar tiefe Einsamkeit!!'<sup>255</sup>

The situation of Iphigenie here is akin to Till's after his return from Hellas; she has freed herself from the painful trammels of existence by her symbolic death in Tauris, but it is impossible to maintain this freedom if she returns to life in the world. Fiedler describes the situation of Iphigenie in Delphi in these terms:

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<sup>252</sup>Atridentetralogie, p. 82; <sup>253</sup>see 15/407-408;  
<sup>254</sup>15/394; <sup>255</sup>15/394.



'Iphigenie ist eine vollständig Geopferte, "ein Tod, der wandelt", und nur in diesem Zustand der Werkzeughaftigkeit konnte sie fühllos mit stahlhartem Blick Griechensöhne opfern. "Gleichsam das heilige Haus der Göttin selbst", stand sie den Unsterblichen näher als der Menschheit, worin der entscheidende Unterschied zu den nur teilweise geopferten Geschwistern besteht, die lediglich kurz aus dem menschlichen Bereich herausgeschleudert wurden, dann aber um so tiefer leiden mussten, da sie den Schutz göttlicher Fühllosigkeit entbehrten.'<sup>256</sup> Further on, Fiedler writes: 'Von inneren Martern gequält, die das Kriterium des Menschseins sind, strebt sie (Elektra) nach einer göttlichen Existenz, in die ihre Schwester "hineingestorben" ist, deren Tragik aber nun darin besteht, dass das Erz, womit Hekate ihren "Geist erbaut, schmelzen will." Sie wird von ihrer Göttin, die sich - "enger mit Apoll vereint" - "in Hellas einen neuen Dienst" bereiten will, gewissermassen fallen gelassen, und die alles Bisherige Überbietende Grausamkeit dieser Absicht besteht darin, dass Iphigenie durch ihre erzwungene Vermählung mit den Unterirdischen ein Uebermass an Schuld auf sich nehmen musste, die zu tragen alles Menschenmögliche übersteigt. Angesichts dieses hereinbrechenden Geschickes bittet Iphigenie - wie seinerzeit Elektra um Bewahrung ihres Menschentums

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<sup>256</sup>Fiedler, 'Die späten Dramen Gerhart Hauptmanns' pp. 120-121.

(Agm.s Tod, S. 29) - um die Erhaltung ihrer Göttlichkeit.<sup>257</sup>

One of the attributes of divinity, then, is immunity from suffering; Iphigenie is unable to face returning to human life without this immunity and, like Till, has no choice but to die. In her own words:

'ich starb ins Göttliche hinein  
und mag im Sterblichen nicht wieder leben.'<sup>258</sup>

Thus, in addition to the external political reasons, which we have already discussed, there is also internal motivation for the death of Iphigenie. For her own sake, for the sake of her family and for the sake of Hellas, she must die. But this final self-sacrifice brings with it yet another apotheosis; she who is already great, becomes still greater. Elektra says of her:

'sie hat  
mich klein gemacht! uns alle winzig klein!'<sup>259</sup>

Pyrkon, the priest of Apollo, explains the significance of Iphigenie's death in these words:

'So nahm die Heilig-Hehre ihren Weg,  
die Priesterin, nun halb schon Gottheit, doch  
zu uns: wo ihr die Kere, die willkommene,  
den selbstgewählten Pfad zum Opfertode -  
dem ewig-sühnenden - in Gnaden freigab.'<sup>260</sup>

Her death, then, like Prospero's is one of atonement.

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<sup>257</sup> Ibid. p. 121; <sup>258</sup> 15/389; <sup>259</sup> 15/410; <sup>260</sup> 15/415.

In the idea of a voluntary self-sacrifice, we see the culmination of Hauptmann's repeated efforts to unify the opposing forces within him, the philanthropic urge to benefit, to 'save' all mankind, and the individualistic thirst for glorification, in its absolute form, the desire to become divine.

We may say, then, that the individualistic element in Hauptmann's messianic vision developed in this way. In the first instance, it was simply a manifestation of the delusions of grandeur which fed on an inner feeling of insecurity. At this stage, the hero who aspired to divinity showed little or no sense of mission towards mankind; the two impulses, the individualistic and the philanthropic were then separate. Hauptmann now set out to unify the two tendencies, making use of the formula of voluntary self-sacrifice, according to which the messianic hero gives up his life for mankind and at the same time is rewarded by an apotheosis. This in itself failed to satisfy Hauptmann's limitless aspiration towards greatness; consequently we find the hero in the end striding from one apotheosis to the next, gaining in stature at each as he approached the godhead. In addition to the two impulses mentioned above, we have observed also in the sacrifice of the messianic hero, a certain weariness of the world, and arising from it, the death wish.



We began our discussion of the messianic vision with the figure of Prometheus. In the end, it was to Prometheus that Hauptmann returned. In 'der neue Christophorus' he wrote: 'Er (Prometheus) liebt die Menschen, die in Martern fortleben, und tritt bei Zeus, dem neuen Vater der Götter für sie ein. Prometheus schafft den Menschen Vorteile. Er wird die mächtigste Erscheinung der ganzen Mythologie: er ist die uns nächste, weil eine halbmenschliche. Dieser Gott, der den ungeheuersten Trotz und eine halbmenschliche Kraftentfaltung bedeutet, erliegt der Macht des obersten Zeus, der damit alles eher beweist, als dass er ein Vater der Menschen ist. Prometheus wird der Dulder genannt. Und da die Duldung von Jesus am Kreuz nur kurz und nur menschlich ist, geht seine Duldung weit über die des Heilands hinaus.'<sup>261</sup> Hauptmann saw himself as Pastor Pavel sees the Bergpater, to whom he says: 'Dann würden Sie etwa an einer übermenschlichen Liebe zu den Menschen leiden, wie Prometheus litt und - trotzdem Sie dessen hoffnungsloses Schicksal vor Augen haben - doch zwangsmässig, und rastlos im gleichen Sinn wirken wie er.'<sup>262</sup> Thus Prometheus remains for Hauptmann the most evocative symbol of his love of mankind and his aspirations to divine greatness.

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<sup>261</sup>Der neue Christophorus, pp. 166-167; <sup>262</sup>ibid. p. 170.

Chapter VIIConclusions

We must now try to bring together into a coherent pattern the aspects of Hauptmann's character and work that we have discussed in the preceding chapters.

Our findings may be summarised as follows:

1. At the centre of Hauptmann's ethos, there is a profound sense of insecurity, which provides the most important stimulus to his imagination. We have found traces of this insecurity in his childhood, when it was fed by the circumstances of his home life in the hotel, and by the disagreements between his father and mother; it was intensified by his unhappiness at school in Breslau, and by his complete failure as a pupil there; it was further intensified in his adolescence, by the privations he suffered as agricultural apprentice at Lederose and by his failure there too; this fundamental lack of security lay behind the wild life led by Hauptmann as a student in Breslau and Jena and no doubt prepared the way for his physical collapse in Rome; finally this inner weakness was aggravated by the problems of his married life, by the ten year long conflict between his love for his first wife Marie, and for his second, Margarete, that ended only when Hauptmann was 42 years old. It is not surprising that he should still show late in life, symptoms of hypochondria, an external manifestation

of this inner weakness.

2. The underlying insecurity stimulates Hauptmann's imagination in two ways. It induces in him feelings of self-pity, often bordering on persecution mania. At the same time, and in reaction to this, it awakens in him visions of grandeur.

3. The most widely known characteristic of Hauptmann is his social pity. The origin of this pity may be found also in the circumstances of his childhood, when he was struck by the stark contrasts between the luxury in which the wealthy hotel guests lived and the wretchedness of the life of the village poor. Hauptmann's social conscience however gained real strength during his student days from association with young men like Alfred Ploetz and his circle; their communist Utopian ideas were current and set working in Hauptmann thoughts about the social problem that were to find expression in many of the early dramas. For Hauptmann, the source of the evils that he attacked lay in the barriers raised between men by their own selfishness and class prejudice; these barriers added to the essential loneliness of the human condition, which already concerned him, the loneliness of a Rose Bernd. As he grew older he became more and more anxious to break down these barriers. Accordingly, the cardinal virtue for him became selflessness, the supreme quality that he saw in Christ, and for a time,



he looked for a solution to the social problem in Christian selflessness; then he visualised 'Eros' - for Hauptmann, a fusion of pagan, physical, with Christian, spiritual love - as the force which would sweep away the barriers. In his later years, his attention became focussed upon the forces of destruction unleashed by modern science; he now sought a unifying principle, a new moral law, which would counteract the danger to mankind. This unifying principle must perform a function similar to 'Eros'; it must destroy more barriers, this time national barriers.

4. Between these determining forces in Hauptmann's character, between the inward-looking self-pity and delusions of grandeur, and the outward-looking social pity, there is a constant interplay. We observed this interplay first in the 'Promethidenlos', in the changing moods of the hero, Selin; self-pity, dreams of grandeur, social pity, messianic dreams, and finally a new and intensified self-pity. When the inward-looking and outward-looking forces are able to combine harmoniously, they result in messianic dreams of grandeur; when they are in conflict with each other, they produce the mood of intensified self-pity.

5. The conflict between the inward and outward-looking tendencies in Hauptmann recurs frequently in the course of his life, and particularly at a time of crisis

in his own or his country's affairs; for example, it was the predominant mood after the initial failures of his 'Florian Geyer' and again after the hostile reception given to the 'Festspiel in deutschen Reimen'; it was in the ascendant during the first world war, and again during the disturbances of the Kapp Putsch. In this conflict, the individualistic forces are always stronger, and the result is invariably a powerful urge to turn inwards to the life of the imagination. The effect upon Hauptmann's work is most clearly apparent in his 'Till Eulenspiegel', the epic poem in which he found refuge during the turmoil of the Kapp Putsch. In the first part, the hero takes an active part in the disturbances of the period, trying to reconcile the opposing factions and to avoid bloodshed; in the second, he turns his back upon Germany and all her troubles and escapes to the world of Ancient Greece. In the end, Hauptmann imagines his hero completely free from the trammels of existence; but when his dream is over, Till must die; for he cannot return to life without again becoming involved in its problems. And so the mood of despair and intense self-pity associated with the conflict we have been discussing, becomes in the long run, the equivalent of the death wish.

6. In Hauptmann's messianic vision, all three elements, persecution mania, dreams of grandeur and social pity, merge. The element of persecution mania

is expressed in the sufferings of the messianic hero, the delusion of grandeur in his apotheosis, the social pity in his mission to save mankind. As might be expected, the messianic task develops in the same direction as Hauptmann's own social pity. To begin with, it is related to the social problem. The hero of the 'Jesusdrama' is directly concerned with social questions; in the final version of the work, the 'selflessness' preached by Quint is Hauptmann's solution to the class war. Other heroes, Meister Heinrich for example, are trying to evoke 'Eros', the force that will break down the social barriers. In the next stage of development. Hauptmann sees his hero as a superhuman educator; he places him at a crossroads in history and gives him the task of leading mankind to a higher level of civilisation. This is the task of Montezuma, of Prospero, Hamlet, Iphigenie, and in the earlier parts of 'der neue Christophorus', of Erdmann. The final stage is reached in the later sections of 'der neue Christophorus', where the historical crossroads are situated in the present, and we find the Bergpater concerned first with the struggle of the individual against a highly organised society, and then with the problems posed to the human race by the destructive power of nuclear weapons; he talks of producing a 'new man' and a new 'book of laws' to save mankind from



self-destruction. For Hauptmann, this task is akin to that of Prometheus saving the human race from destruction at the hands of the Titans.

7. The other aspect of the messianic vision, which we have called the apotheosis, is a manifestation of the grandeur delusion. Hauptmann's youthful dreams of grandeur may be divided into two categories, those associated with his enthusiasm for social reform, in which he saw himself now as Prometheus, now as Christ, saving mankind, and those inspired by his artistic aspirations, when he saw himself as a divine creator. Both types of dream ultimately play their part in the apotheosis motif. This motif first appears in Hannele's dream, a pure dream of grandeur, the origin of which is clearly shown to be the sufferings of the heroine, a victim of social wrongs. The motif recurs in a number of plays in which, at the moment of final disaster, the hero triumphs over defeat and death - for example, Florian Geyer, Arnold Kramer, Montezuma and Hamlet; it is characteristic of Hauptmann, that he should try to give to each of these characters the suggestion of an affinity with Christ. The essentially Christ-like figure is of course Quint, who strives desperately to achieve a final apotheosis according to the Hauptmann formula, by freely sacrificing himself. his sacrifice is rejected however, and in any case his motives are far

from the selflessness of Hauptmann's ideal; yet he does achieve a kind of dream apotheosis in his 'mystic union with Christ'. All these characters and their experiences may be seen to stem originally from Hauptmann's first messianic dreams. In 'Und Pippa tanzt', in the character of Wann, we see the first real fruits of the artistic dream of grandeur; in Wann, Hauptmann sees himself as an almost divine being endowed with superhuman gifts - the divine spark of the creative artist. Much later, Pater Johannes plays a similar role in 'Die Tochter der Kathedrale'. In the meantime, in 'Indipohdi', the two streams had merged; Prospero is a successor to Wann; he too has superhuman powers, but unlike Wann, he also undergoes an apotheosis; he sacrifices himself for the natives of his island and thereby attains a yet more sublime status. Both streams are represented in 'Der neue Christophorus'; the Bergpater is a figure like Wann, while Erdmann appears destined to sacrifice himself to save mankind. In the latter part of the work, there are signs that the Bergpater might sacrifice himself - he is called a new Prometheus; in that case he would be related to Prospero. As the work is a fragment however, these themes are not pursued to the end. The apotheosis motif reaches its culmination in the 'Atridentetralogie', where Iphigenie undergoes no fewer than three apotheoses, each time by voluntary

self-sacrifice, each time rising higher and higher in the divine order.

8. It is interesting to note that at the approach of the final apotheosis, the situation of Iphigenie bears some relationship to Till's after his return from Ancient Greece. Both are unable to return to life without losing the quality for which they have striven, Till his absolute individual freedom, Iphigenie her divine greatness. The death wish that lies behind both these visions only serves to underline the common source from which they spring, Hauptmann's fundamental sense of weakness and the consequent feeling that he cannot face the problems of living. The divine aspirations of a Prospero or an Iphigenie are tinged with the world weariness of a Till.



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